2026 NFL PREVIEW

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EDITOR'S LETTER

We may be living in an offensive era, but I'd like to kick this magazine off by talking about defense.

In the ongoing chess match that is NFL football, defenses have changed the complexion of the board altogether.

Alert readers will remember that I spent this space last year extolling offensive innovation in the form of the game's running back renaissance. And yes, offensive excellence is still plentiful — for evidence, just read Craig Ellenport's story on page 24 of this magazine about the wide receiver golden age that we are currently enjoying.

But defense can still win you championships, and schematic innovation can cut both ways.

A revealing example came in February on the game's biggest stage, when the Seattle Seahawks defense suffocated and stymied the New England Patriots in a 29-13 snoozefest in Super Bowl LX. That night in Santa Clara, Calif., the Patriots ran into a brick wall of Mike Macdonald's construction.

The Seattle head coach stands at the vanguard of defensive innovation. The game has even had to adjust its vernacular in an attempt to describe what modern defenses like Macdonald's are up to. Phrases like "chess piece" and "Swiss Army knife" have become commonplace, as defensive coordinators strive to maximize player versatility — almost to the point of rendering traditional defensive position descriptions useless. Macdonald's deployment of safety/nickel/linebacker/roving menace Nick Emmanwori as a jack-of-all-trades typifies this new approach.

As usual, Athlon writer Doug Farrar has his finger on the pulse of NFL trends, and he sat down with Macdonald during the offseason to pick the brain of the most influential defensive coach in today's game. Read what Macdonald had to say about his gameplan that night at Levi's Stadium, and about what 2026 has in store for the defending champs, in Doug's interview on page 20.

Doug amplifies what he learned in his conversation with Macdonald in his feature story "Connecting the Dots" on p. 16. Defenders can play with fluidity and freedom, yes, but it has to happen in the context of a team concept in which every level of the defense is connected.

It's truly fascinating to watch the back-and-forth, and I have no doubt that Sean McVey and the other geniuses in headsets are in the lab right now concocting a response of their own.

While we wait for the games to resume, we hope you enjoy the essential summer companion you are holding. It's our pleasure to bring it to you year after year.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy the season.

Rob Doster

ROB DOSTER, MANAGING EDITOR

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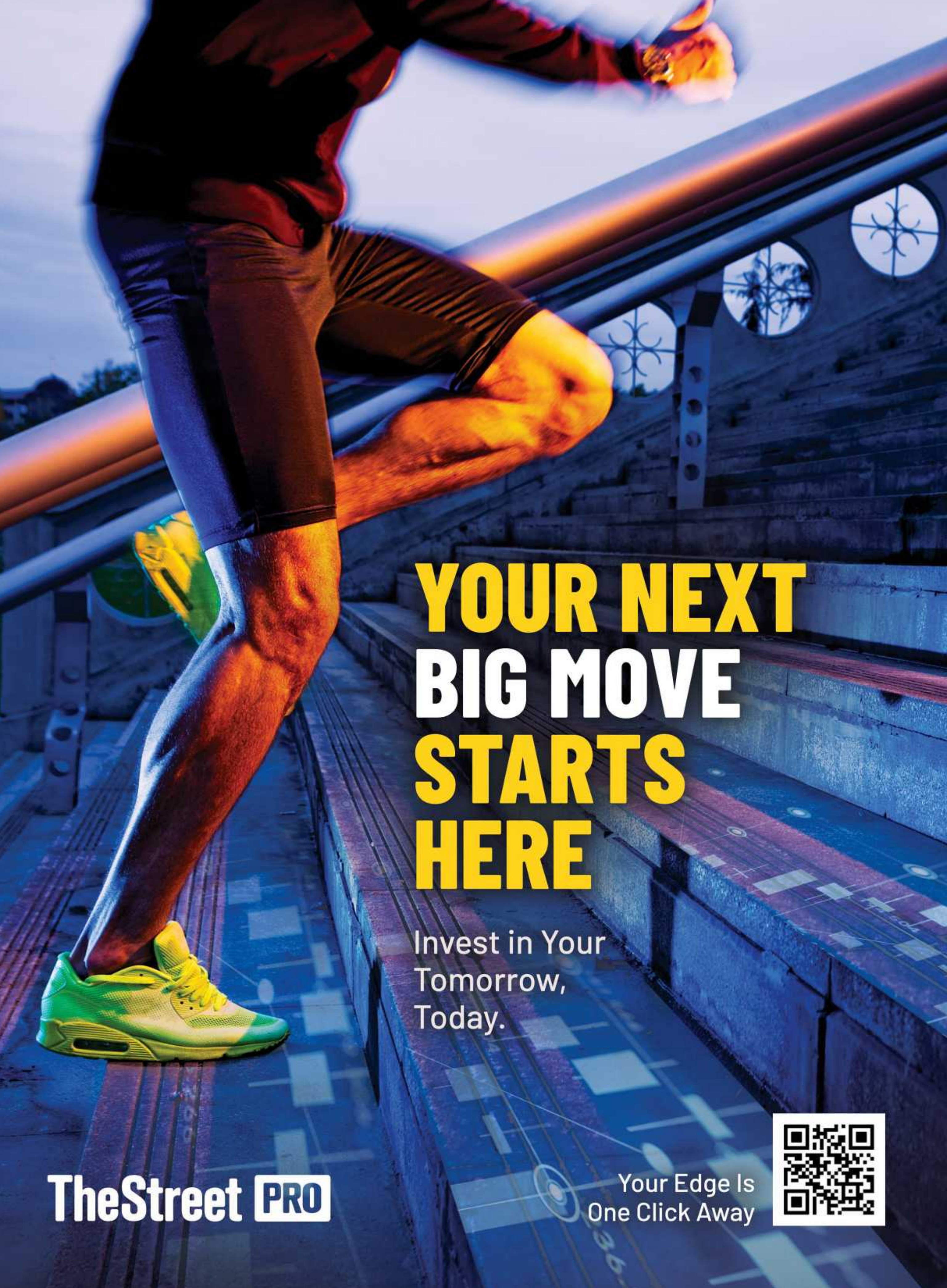
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THE 2026 NFL SEASON WILL HAVE NO SHORTAGE OF COMPELLING STORYLINES. HERE ARE THE BIGGEST ONES TO KEEP AN EYE ON.

15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2026

BY LUKE EASTERLING

1 JUST WIN, BABY

The quarterback play in Las Vegas last season was anything but entertaining for Raiders fans, but the team made multiple moves in the offseason to help reduce the likelihood of an encore.

First came the signing of veteran Kirk Cousins in free agency, following his release from the Atlanta Falcons. Cousins stabilized the floor of the position in the short term, but the Raiders still needed a long-term solution at the game's most important position.

Thankfully, they also happened to have the No. 1 overall pick in the 2026 NFL Draft. This year's quarterback class lacked overall depth and high-end talent, but there was still a worthy signal-caller to pluck at the top of the board: Indiana's Fernando Mendoza.

After transferring from Cal, Mendoza promptly led the Hoosiers to an undefeated season and the program's first national title, collecting the Heisman Trophy along the way.

While he may not be in the Caleb Williams/Jayden Daniels/Drake Maye tier from 2024 in terms of his physical traits and upside, Mendoza is a poised, polished passer who excels from the pocket, makes sound decisions with the football and knows how to deliver in the clutch. He was also a respected leader in the locker room, and he's already made it clear that he's taking the humble approach to earning that trust from his new teammates in Vegas.

Cousins gives the Raiders valuable starting experience and the kind of knowledge base a young passer like Mendoza should benefit from every day in practice and meetings, as well as on game day. If he can stay healthy, Cousins' presence should enable the Raiders to bring Mendoza along slowly, only putting him into the starter's role once they believe he's ready.

No matter who's throwing the passes, though, the standard will be the same one that the late Al Davis enshrined all those years ago as the identity of his beloved franchise.

FERNANDO MENDOZA

2

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE

The party is still going hard in the Emerald City, as the 12s continue to celebrate another Super Bowl victory throughout the entire offseason.

Who needs to sleep when you've got a Lombardi Trophy in each hand now?

The Seahawks' 2025 title run began with an offseason full of questionable moves that generated plenty of debate, from trading away quarterback Geno Smith and replacing him with Sam Darnold to dealing wide receiver DK Metcalf to the Pittsburgh Steelers. Division rival Cooper Kupp replaced veteran wide receiver Tyler Lockett, and Klint Kubiak took over as offensive coordinator for Ryan Grubb, who was fired after only one season. Key additions arrived on both sides of the ball, though, with outside linebacker DeMarcus Lawrence and wide receiver Rashid Shaheed making a massive impact, particularly throughout the postseason.

Darnold turned in an MVP-worthy campaign, and wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba took home NFL Offensive Player of the Year honors after taking over for Metcalf as the team's unquestioned No. 1 receiver. A two-headed monster in the backfield (Kenneth Walker III, Zach Charbonnet) kept the offense balanced, and after Charbonnet went down with a season-ending torn ACL in the Divisional Round, Walker shouldered the majority of the workload on his way to winning Super Bowl MVP.

Head coach Mike Macdonald's defense was the backbone of the team's identity all season long, though. Every level of the unit had a dynamic playmaker wreaking havoc on opposing offenses, and the group saved its masterpiece for the biggest stage, turning in a dominant performance in a 29-13 victory over the New England Patriots for a measure of Super Bowl revenge from more than a decade prior.

There will be challenges if the Seahawks want to repeat, as there always are for defending champs. Walker left in free agency, while the Las Vegas Raiders hired Kubiak to be their new head coach. The defense lost three key players to free agency, too (OLB Boye Mafe, S Coby Bryant, CB Riq Woolen).

But as Seattle begins its quest to defend in 2026, the sleepless nights will belong to the quarterbacks and offensive coordinators still trying to find a way to survive Macdonald's suffocating defense — and to coaches and defenders across the league who hope to slow down an offense that returns most of its starters and added a first-round pick in the backfield to replace Walker (Notre Dame's Jadarian Price).

Good luck with that.

OPPOSITE: CANDICE WARD-IMAGN IMAGES; TOP RIGHT: ROBERT DEUTSCH

3

POST-INJURY PATRICK

The 2025 season was a constant struggle for the Kansas City Chiefs and quarterback Patrick Mahomes, who put up the worst numbers of his career while leading the team to a shocking 6-8 record. Things went from bad to worse when Mahomes' season came to a premature end due to a torn ACL in a Week 15 loss to the Los Angeles Chargers.

It's still unclear whether or not Mahomes will be fully cleared to return to action in time for Week 1 of the 2026 regular season. The Chiefs made an offseason trade to acquire QB Justin Fields, who could end up starting the season at the top of the depth chart if Mahomes is still working his way back to full strength.

PATRICK MAHOMES

Once he does return, Mahomes will have the benefit of tight end Travis Kelce returning for another season, though he isn't the dynamic downfield threat he once was. The addition of Super Bowl MVP running back Kenneth Walker III from Seattle should help bolster the run game, keep the offense balanced and relieve Mahomes from having to carry the offense through the air.

Whenever he gets back on the field, don't be surprised if Mahomes makes up for lost time and does everything he can to return to his usual high level of play, taking the Chiefs with him as they launch themselves back into Super Bowl contention.

4

GOING GLOBAL

The NFL's international footprint will continue to grow this season, as the league will play nine games outside of the United States in 2026.

Three of them will take place in London, with the Jacksonville Jaguars playing "host" for two. The Washington Commanders will be the host team for the third London game, while the New Orleans Saints will be the "home" team in Paris (the NFL's first regular-season trip to France). Ditto for the Detroit Lions in Munich, the Atlanta Falcons in Madrid and the San Francisco 49ers in Mexico City.

The 49ers and the Los Angeles Rams will face off in Melbourne (another first-time site for a regular-season NFL game), while the Baltimore Ravens vs. Dallas Cowboys matchup will take place in Rio de Janeiro.

5

Running Back Renaissance

For all the talk of "devaluing" the position lately, running backs who have gone high in the first round continue to hit at an impressive rate.

Over the past 10 years, running backs taken among the top 12 picks have lived up to the hype, with few exceptions. Ezekiel Elliott (No. 4 overall, 2016), Christian McCaffrey (No. 8 overall, 2017), Saquon Barkley (No. 2 overall, 2018), Bijan Robinson (No. 8 overall, 2023) and Jahmyr Gibbs (No. 12 overall, 2023) all achieved superstar status and, with the exception of Elliott, continue to maintain that level of impact for their respective teams.

Doubts about "positional value" at running back didn't stop the Raiders from spending last year's No. 6 overall pick on Ashton Jeanty, who overcame a slow start to his rookie season to deliver flashes of brilliance down the stretch, despite a lackluster supporting cast.

The trend continued again this year with Notre Dame's Jeremiyah Love, who was arguably the best overall prospect in the 2026 draft class. The Arizona Cardinals selected him at No. 3 overall, making him the highest-drafted running back since Barkley.

It's true that teams can still find productive backs in the middle and late rounds of the draft, but history continues to prove that if you want one of the special ones, you have to draft them early, and they usually deliver. We'll see if Jeanty and Love can keep the trend going this year and beyond.

ASHTON JEANTY

JEREMIYAH LOVE

6

NEXT STOP: CANTON

There are plenty of future Hall of Famers who are still active players, but the 2026 season might be our last chance to see them on the field.

Quarterbacks Aaron Rodgers and Matthew Stafford will be on annual retirement watch at this point in their careers, and the same applies to tight end Travis Kelce and offensive tackle Trent Williams, two of the best players to ever play their respective positions. On defense, linebacker Bobby Wagner and defensive end Cameron Heyward could be heading into their final seasons, along with outside linebackers Von Miller and Khalil Mack.

Other legendary veterans, like the wide receiver trio of Mike Evans, Davante Adams and DeAndre Hopkins, still feel like they have more than one year left in the tank. That said, you never know when a player will decide it's time to hang 'em up, so don't miss any chance to see these icons in action before they ride off into the sunset — and into football immortality in Canton.

7

Leadership Void

There are Tampa Bay Buccaneers fans in middle school who have never seen their favorite team suit up for a game without either Lavonte David or Mike Evans on the roster. That will change this fall, as No. 54 and No. 13 will be absent from One Buc Place and Raymond James Stadium.

David, a second-round pick out of Nebraska in the 2012 NFL Draft, retired this offseason after spending his entire 14-year career in a Bucs uniform. Evans, a top-10 pick in 2014 out of Texas A&M, opted for a new challenge after 12 seasons in Tampa, signing a three-year deal with the San Francisco 49ers in free agency.

LAVONTE DAVID AND MIKE EVANS

Both longtime captains and respected leaders, David and Evans are all over the franchise record books. Evans holds every major receiving record in team history, while nobody in Bucs history has more tackles, tackles for a loss, forced fumbles or fumble recoveries than David.

David and Evans will both have gold jackets waiting for them in Canton down the road, but in the meantime, the Bucs have massive voids to fill on both sides of the ball after watching two of the most legendary players in franchise history sail off to new chapters.

FROM LEFT: KIYOSHI MIO-IMAGN IMAGES; ROB SCHUMACHER/THE REPUBLIC; KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

8

NEW ERA FOR STEELERS, RAVENS

The last time the Pittsburgh Steelers took the field without Mike Tomlin as their head coach, John Legend had just won "Best New Artist" at the Grammys. A year later, it was Carrie Underwood taking home that honor while the Baltimore Ravens played their most recent season without John Harbaugh wearing the big headset.

Both franchises have enjoyed consistent success over nearly two decades with those leaders at their respective helms, but new regimes are now in place heading into the 2026 season. Tomlin resigned after another disappointing first-round playoff exit, while Harbaugh and the Ravens parted ways after barely missing the playoffs following an injury-riddled 2025 campaign. Tomlin is headed for TV work, while Harbaugh quickly landed his next head-coaching gig with the New York Giants.

Replacing Tomlin is a familiar face in Mike McCarthy, who brings a ton of experience and success from his time leading the Green Bay Packers and Dallas Cowboys, including a Super Bowl win he shared with Aaron Rodgers, who is expected to be his quarterback once again in Pittsburgh. The task of following Harbaugh in Baltimore goes to first-time head coach Jesse Minter, who is coming off an impressive tenure as the Los Angeles Chargers' defensive coordinator.

Nothing lasts forever, and every team needs a new voice at some point. But while many fans in Baltimore and Pittsburgh have been clamoring for better results in recent years, they might get a harsh reminder of just how good they've had it over the past two decades if their new coaches fail to maintain that standard.

MIKE McCARTHY AND JESSE MINTER

9

FUTURE RAM-IFICATIONS

After winning the Super Bowl at the end of the 2020 season, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers spent a second-round pick on Florida quarterback Kyle Trask as a potential successor to Tom Brady instead of picking a player who could contribute immediately for a team that hoped to repeat. The Bucs went 13-4 in 2021, but injuries along the offensive line and in the defensive backfield contributed to their failure to earn back-to-back Lombardi Trophies; they lost in the divisional playoff round to the Los Angeles Rams. Bucs fans still wonder what could have been.

The Rams themselves might have just one-upped the Bucs in this particular department, having spent the No. 13 overall pick in the 2026 NFL Draft on Alabama QB Ty Simpson. Few disagreed that Simpson was the next-best quarterback in this year's class after Fernando Mendoza, but he was widely regarded as a fringe first-round prospect due to a lack of starting experience and high-end physical tools, as well as inconsistent play down the stretch last season for the Crimson Tide.

Simpson should obviously benefit from learning behind a future Hall of Famer in Matthew Stafford, as well as playing within head coach Sean McVay's innovative scheme. But the Rams could have spent that pick on any number of players at other positions who could have made an immediate impact for a team that has hopes of making another deep playoff run. Many expected USC wide receiver Makai Lemon to be the pick, which would have given Stafford another explosive weapon to line up alongside WRs Puka Nacua and Davante Adams. They also passed on top-10 talents like edge Rueben Bain Jr. and offensive lineman Olaivavega Ioane.

Is it possible the Rams still make a Super Bowl run this year with Simpson riding the bench and taking notes from Stafford? Sure. Could Simpson prove to be a successful starter whenever Stafford decides to hang up his cleats? Of course.

But if they don't bring home another Lombardi with Stafford at the helm, Rams fans will wonder if one of those other prospects could have made the difference, and the pressure for Simpson to live up to the cost of making him the future of the franchise will be through the roof.

TY SIMPSON

FROM TOP: CHARLES LECLAIRE-IMAGN IMAGES; LEXI THOMPSON-IMAGN IMAGES; REESE STRICKLAND-IMAGN IMAGES

10

PERSONNEL MATTERS

It's a popular refrain that the NFL is a "copycat league," and the latest offensive trend seems to be getting as many tight ends as humanly possible on the field at the same time.

It's no surprise that this trend appears to have originated with head coach Sean McVay and the Los Angeles Rams, whose matchup-oriented approach to using "13 personnel" (one running back, three tight ends), a strategy that came partially as a result of injuries at other positions, gradually morphed into an offensive identity that began to define the team's entire approach down the stretch and into the postseason.

KENYON SADIQ

TROY WAYRYNEN-IMAGN IMAGES

"It's helped give us an identity," McVay said in December. "It's taking advantage of all of our players, but also lessening the workload that allows some of those other players, particularly the wideouts, to be fresher in some known pass situations."

The trend was on display in the 2026 NFL Draft. Though Oregon's Kenyon Sadiq was the only first-rounder at the position (No. 16 overall to the New York Jets), the Philadelphia Eagles' selection of Vanderbilt's Eli Stowers at No. 54 overall set off a run of eight tight ends coming off the board in a 42-pick stretch. Tight ends went at picks 54 (Stowers), 56 (Texas A&M's Nate Boerkircher, Jacksonville Jaguars), 59 (Michigan's Marlin Klein, Houston Texans) and 61 (Ohio State's Max Klare, Rams) in the second round, then at picks 69 (Stanford's Sam Roush, Chicago Bears), 73 (Georgia's Oscar Delp, New Orleans Saints), 87 (Ohio State's Will Kacmarek, Miami Dolphins) and 95 (Notre Dame's Eli Raridon, New England Patriots) in the third round.

Boerkircher, Klein and Kacmarek, in particular, went multiple rounds earlier than most analysts in the media were projecting, but it's clear that teams had this schematic trend on their minds when they were on the clock in that range.

"That was rooted in our own internal sentiment, and understanding that the trend in the NFL was that heavier tight end sets was gonna be something that got prioritized," Jaguars general manager James Gladstone said after the draft when asked about the Boerkircher pick. "And we certainly felt a heavier tight end run throughout the back end of the second (round) and into the third."

Next up, watch how NFL defenses combat this trend with heavier personnel on their side of things, more beef in the trenches and prioritizing strength and physicality at the second level.

11

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

The overall level of officiating has drawn tons of well-deserved criticism from fans in recent years, but there might be some light at the end of the tunnel. The NFL and the union that represents the officials have agreed to a new seven-year Collective Bargaining Agreement that will avoid a work stoppage (and the need for replacement refs for the first time since that debacle in 2012). The new deal reportedly gives the league more access to officials during the offseason. It also includes the development of a "bench" of officials and features a new formal training program. After what we've experienced in this department over the past few seasons, this new deal should lead to some much-needed improvements.

12

COACHING CAROUSEL

The New York Giants (John Harbaugh), Baltimore Ravens (Jesse Minter), Pittsburgh Steelers (Mike McCarthy) and Las Vegas Raiders (Klint Kubiak) aren't the only clubs that will be breaking in new head coaches this season

Seven teams have new leaders in the big chair, with Minter and Kubiak being joined by Jeff Hafley (Miami Dolphins) and Todd Monken (Cleveland Browns) as NFL first-timers. Hafley takes over a Miami squad entering a massive rebuild after serving as the Green Bay Packers' defensive coordinator last season, while Monken gets his first head-coaching gig in the NFL at 60, having most recently served as offensive coordinator for the division-rival Ravens under Harbaugh.

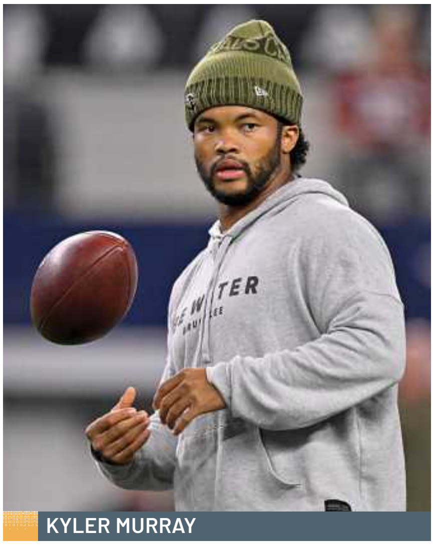
Speaking of Harbaugh, he won't be the only one on the list with previous head-coaching experience. While McCarthy heads home to Pennsylvania to head up the Steelers' staff, Robert Saleh is taking over the Tennessee Titans in place of Brian Callahan and interim head coach Mike McCoy, giving him another crack at it after going 20-36 over nearly four seasons leading the New York Jets.

McCarthy and Harbaugh both have Super Bowl wins to their credit, and their new teams will be hoping they can lead them to another one, while the Ravens look to make it three straight championship hires with Minter succeeding Harbaugh and Brian Billick before him. Kubiak and Hafley were master scheme designers and play-callers on their respective sides of the ball last season, but now they'll have to prove they can be just as effective at the big-picture responsibilities that come with the head coach title as they are at X's and O's. Monken's career experience at both the college and pro levels is impressive, and in Cleveland, he'll finally get the chance to channel that into his own regime from the top spot.

13

SECOND-CHANCE QBs

The NFL has seen a recent trend of success among quarterback reclamation projects, with the likes of Sam Darnold, Baker Mayfield, Geno Smith and Daniel Jones all finding success after struggling to live up to high expectations earlier in their careers. We have some candidates to join them on that list in 2026, as multiple signal-callers will be looking to resurrect their careers after failing to fully prove themselves in their original landing spots.


KYLER MURRAY

The Arizona Cardinals parted ways this offseason with Kyler Murray, who landed in arguably the best place for a quarterback's second act. Minnesota Vikings head coach Kevin O'Connell has had a hand in bringing both Darnold and Jones back into league relevance, and he'll now get a chance to do it again with the former No. 1 overall pick.

In Miami, the Dolphins moved on from Tua Tagovailoa this offseason, taking on a massive dead cap hit just to make a clean break. The Atlanta Falcons are taking a chance on the talent that made Tagovailoa a star at Alabama, adding him to a quarterback room that features another high-upside southpaw in Michael Penix Jr., who is still working his way back from season-ending ACL reconstruction surgery.

If both quarterbacks can revive their careers this season, it would give their current teams valuable bargains in the short-term and potentially deliver another massive payday to each player while setting them up for a successful second act.

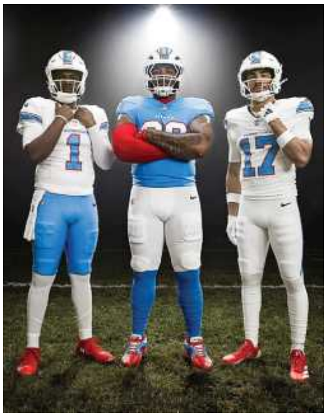
14

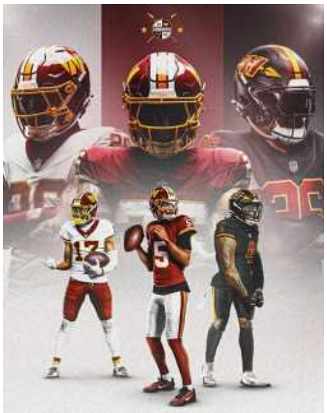
MUCH-NEEDED MAKEOVERS

Five NFL teams overhauled their uniforms this offseason to some degree, all of them making major improvements over their previous closets.

The Tennessee Titans brought back the Oilers' color scheme with their more classic new look, while the Washington Commanders took a similar path with a base uniform set that resembles what the franchise used previously for decades. The Atlanta Falcons ditched their awful duds for a cleaner look, while the Baltimore Ravens made improvements to what was already one of the league's best overall sets (those new black helmets are elite).

The most subtle changes came from the Los Angeles Rams, who simply ditched the gradient on their numbers and cleaned up their current look, making small but noticeable upgrades.





All five of those teams will look much better on the field this season than they did in 2025.

JEROME MIRON-IMAGN IMAGES; TITANS AND COMMANDERS VIA OFFICIAL INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

15

BEST OF THE REST

There are way more than 15 compelling storylines swirling around the 2026 NFL season. Here are many more to watch this fall:

- Can Lamar Jackson, Josh Allen or Joe Burrow finally get over the hump and lead their team to a Super Bowl victory?
- Will Drake Maye deliver another MVP-caliber season after leading the New England Patriots to the Super Bowl in his second year?
- Will the New York Jets' defense actually intercept a single pass this season?
- Can the Dallas Cowboys' offseason additions return them to playoff contention?
- Which version of Jalen Hurts and the Philadelphia Eagles offense will we get in 2026?
- Can Malik Nabers, Jaxson Dart and Cam Skattebo stay healthy enough to make John Harbaugh's first season a success with the New York Giants?
- Will the Washington Commanders get a full season of Jayden Daniels' dynamic playmaking ability?
- Who will start at quarterback for the Cleveland Browns this season, and will it actually matter?
- Can the Chicago Bears' defense raise its level of play to match what Ben Johnson and Caleb Williams are doing on offense?
- Has the Super Bowl window closed for Dan Campbell and the Detroit Lions?
- Can Jordan Love finally live up to his potential and lead the Green Bay Packers on a Super Bowl run?
- Will rookie-year C.J. Stroud re-emerge for the Houston Texans, instead of wasting another dominant season from one of the league's best defenses?

Q&A

A conversation with MIKE MACDONALD

TURNAROUND ARTIST

by DOUG FARRAR

Before he became the third head coach in Seattle Seahawks history to take the franchise to a Super Bowl — Mike Holmgren and Pete Carroll were the others — and the second after Carroll to win a Lombardi Trophy for the Emerald City, Mike Macdonald made his name as an immediate reformer of bad defenses.

That was the case under Jim Harbaugh at Michigan, and under John Harbaugh with the Baltimore Ravens, which led the Seahawks to make Macdonald Carroll's replacement on Jan. 31, 2024. Immediately, a team that had lost its way under Carroll began to refocus. Year 1 of the Macdonald era saw the Seahawks barely miss the playoffs with a 10-7 record, and Year 2 saw the franchise tear through the rest of the NFL in a season that culminated with a 29-13 win over the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LX.

Macdonald's process-driven coaching style is a big part of his life, but there's more to the story. He graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business in 2010, and he earned his master's degree in sports management from Georgia in 2013 while serving as safeties and defensive quality control coach for the Bulldogs. That led to a six-year stint with the Ravens during which he rose from coaching intern to linebackers coach before accepting the job as Michigan's defensive coordinator.

When you talk with the players Macdonald coaches, the singular subject that comes up is his ability to cultivate a universal buy-in very quickly. Now, Macdonald's challenge is the rare achievement of winning back-to-back Super Bowls, and *Athlon Sports* spoke with him as he was preparing for that opportunity.

***Athlon Sports*: In 2021, you became Michigan's defensive coordinator and ran a defense that allowed 17.4 points per game (eighth in the FBS) after allowing 34.5 points per game the year before (95th in the FBS). In 2022, you became the Ravens' defensive coordinator, and the defense went from 28th in DVOA in 2021 to eighth in 2022 to first in 2023. Then, Seattle's defense went from 28th in DVOA in 2023 to 10th in your first season in 2024 to first in 2025. How do you keep turning defenses around?**

Mike Macdonald: I guess I don't see it as turning anything around. That's probably the first principle. I think we had a great opportunity at Michigan. That was my first opportunity to employ the vision that I had about how we wanted to play defense, and we obviously catered that schematically to what I felt like we needed to be able to do in college. Some of the language and how you streamline it with signals and tempos, all that stuff was a little different. The methods behind it were a little different. But to see how it came together like that, you could do it the way that I envisioned. I think that those are the principles of how we're applying it.

> "IT'S THE SAME DESTINATION, BUT THE JOURNEY IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WITH A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SET OF PEOPLE.

I don't really see it as a turnaround because it's a new opportunity. It really doesn't matter what they did before. I think just the way we see defense, it takes everybody. It has to be complementary.

And you can't play in silos. The three levels of defense need to be connected at all times.

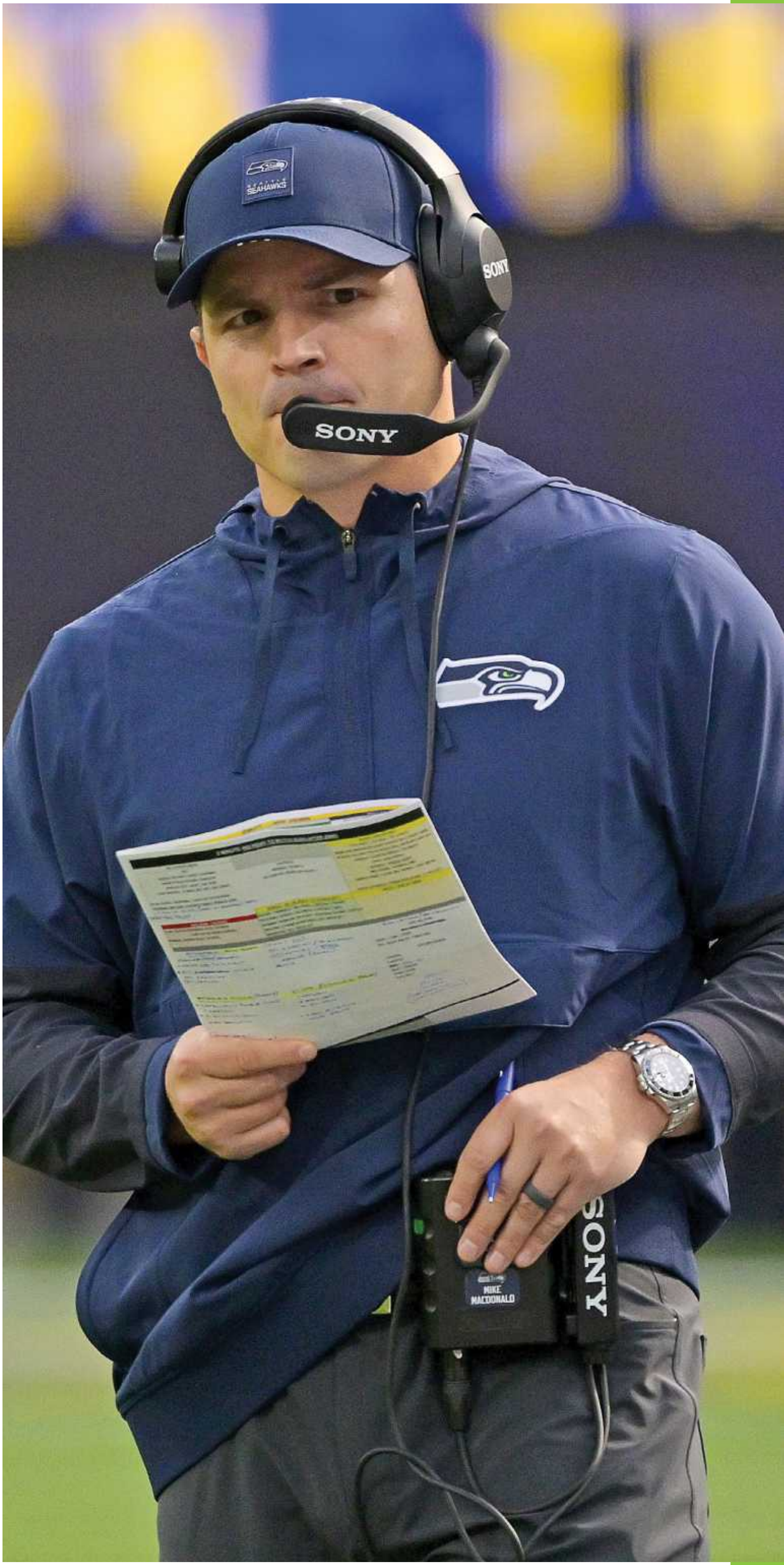
You've got to build it from the ground up, and how you play is really important. How you can connect your staff so you can be in one accord all of the time. Those are the principles that match how I felt like we needed to be able to play.

And then, schematically or tactically, I think it's about knowing what you need to be able to do in order to stop offenses. I actually had this thought when I was at Michigan, and I was watching the [NFL] playoffs. I was watching the Patrick Mahomes-Josh Allen game that went back and forth, and the lead changed all the time at the very end. [Macdonald is referring to the 2021 AFC Championship Game, in which the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Buffalo Bills, 42-36, and the lead changed hands five times in the fourth quarter and overtime.] And it just came to me. I was like, look, you can't blitz or "cute pressure" your way to a championship. You can't do that every down. You have to have a connected team that can rush and affect these athletic quarterbacks and get them to hold the ball.

In Super Bowl LIX, the Philadelphia Eagles beat up Mahomes, and they didn't blitz once. I asked [Eagles linebacker] Zack Baun how they were able to do it. Baun said, "Because everything is interconnected, and everyone knows what everyone else is doing." It's pretty much the same thing.

Yeah, I'm thinking more like style of play. Can you create a place where, how you do what you do is important right down the line? For everyone on our staff, to all our players, there's a standard of how we want to play. We do have a vision about how we want to play, about being able to play match coverages and denying the ball, and getting the quarterback to hold it, but also to have the ability to bring various kinds of targeted strike pressures when needed.

I felt like we didn't want to just be a one-track team. I guess that's my



JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA-IMAGN IMAGES

point. You can't just do one thing. You can't just blitz your way to a championship. I don't think you can four-man rush your way to a championship. What the Eagles did, that's not really my expertise.

Mike Macdonald and GM John Schneider

I also remember asking you about halfway through your first season in Seattle about defending the run with light boxes and two-deep safeties because it's obviously what everyone wants to do now. In your answer, you talked about scheme to a point, but it was really about the right types of players for you. And in the Super Bowl, you guys were in dime (six defensive backs) on 40 of your 72 defensive snaps, but you were able to keep the Patriots' power-run game under wraps. Why are you able to believe in your "sub-package" defenses, which are really base, as much as you do?
We pictured that's where we needed to be able to go, where we didn't want teams to be able to win by living in 11 personnel, and building 11, 12 and 13 out of it. By how we reacted on the field, we wanted to dictate more terms of the offense, if that makes sense. You don't want your opponent to be able to figure out how you're going to play them after the huddle rather than before the huddle. It would help us if we could stay as much in the same personnel group as possible.

And then, it's to see the guys do what they do every day that gives you the confidence to say that you can play that way. You know, as you're watching us train, and you're watching our players play, and then you're game-planning, you're kind of trying to overlap those things to see if we're going to be able to play our style of ball and put ourselves in situations where we can stop the run and do things like that. But that's what gives you the confidence, to see how our guys played, how we were coaching it, what they did in practice, and then obviously their body of work.

> THERE'S A STANDARD OF HOW WE WANT TO PLAY.

By committing to that, we do know how to defend a lot of the plays that we're getting now in these structures. I think it's kind of like an AI bot. You just kind of keep learning as it goes, you know, and as teams start to evolve, you're evolving with it. You also have the advantage of growing from those reps that you've seen, rather than living in different worlds. And now, it's hard to stack some of those run-defense looks, and how you want to play them. So, the guys get a lot of time on task.

Last season, you played five different base coverages at least 12% of the time — Cover-1, Cover-2, Cover-3, Cover-4 and Cover-6. With a lot of teams, it's more, "We're going to play 60% Cover-3," or whatever. Why is it so important for you to be coverage-agnostic, for lack of a better term?
I don't think we've ever put a number on anything that we want to do. We don't say we want to be in a coverage a certain percent of the time; we don't say we want to be in a four-man rush a certain percent of the time. We just don't think through that lens. The way we train our guys and the way we coach our system, we go through concepts first, and we go through techniques, before we ever introduce a coverage name or a full-fledged play. We don't install a play until you know, the middle of Phase 2.

Our guys have to learn conceptually about how things fit, and how you've got to play certain techniques. And then it's about, okay, how do we put the scheme together to let our guys go play fast, and give them as many answers as possible? But we're not tallying the percentages of what we're playing and when. I think it's all about how we want to attack certain offenses.

It seems that offenses can't really get a tell on what you do. It's not, "Oh, if we do this, they're going to switch to Cover-3."
Yeah, that's right. We don't. It goes

back to the personnel things. Why give them the answers to the test before you have to, you know? We're trying to figure out what they're trying to figure out based on what we can do. So, it's a game of attrition on that front.

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

You're also about creating havoc at the line with stunts. I think you stunt more than you blitz, which is unusual for some teams. And then, you have a lot of post-snap coverage switches. Why are both so important to what you do?
Well, the stunt and the pressure thing, again, it doesn't come from, "Hey, we need to stunt more than we need to pressure." We don't really have that conversation, but I will say, we believe that when you do move the front, especially in passing situations, that creates the most pressure. But it requires you to play together, and it requires you to play in this kind of synergistic way, and have that type of attitude to do it. You can't just run stunts for the hell of running stunts.

It's a chemistry thing about how you play off one another. You don't just run them in silos, if that makes sense. It's all connected with who wins and when, and how you overlap. That takes a lot of time on task and chemistry and buy-in, and all that stuff. But we do feel like that is the best way to operate, rather than just letting a guy win and then we play off of that.

(Regarding disguised coverages) I mean, our default presentation is a [two-high safety] shell. And again, if you're not forced to, and why would you tell them what you're in before the ball is snapped? We play a lot of match coverage. I think the NFL right now is trending more towards disguised versions of Cover-2, and over rotations, and things like that where people are getting to the spots from funky alignments. We prefer more subtle changes to our coverage, rather than these big overarching crazy shifts when the ball is snapped. I guess it starts with the philosophy of trying to get the quarterback to hold the ball, and you let the rush come to life. If you're running spot-drop (predetermined) zones, there's time and place for it. We just don't do it as much as I feel like the rest of the league is going right now.

"I DON'T REALLY SEE IT AS A TURNAROUND BECAUSE IT'S A NEW OPPORTUNITY.

The Seahawks now have the opportunity to be the 10th team and ninth franchise to win back-to-back Super Bowls. What are you telling your team about how to get that done? Have you spoken to anyone responsible for some of those back-to-backs about how to get a better view of the process?
I have reached out to some people who have won back-to-back championships. And it's been great advice, but I think the thing that we learned last year is like, look, we want to do it our way with how we go about our business every day, and what's best for the Seahawks. It's great to learn from other people, but by no means are we trying to copy other people's style or trying to do it that way. The overarching thing is, it's the same destination, but the journey is completely different with a completely different set of people.

Even for the people that were here last year … I mean, it's different viewpoints, and it's different experiences that are under their belts. We're going to have a lot of new people joining us from other teams who lost some great players. So to me, we're saying that instead of running it back or defending anything, we want to run our process forward. How do we be us and take the next version of us as a team forward, and do that every day? I don't think that our process or our viewpoint about who we want to become, or how we get there, changes because of the Super Bowl or what we evolved to in terms of what we did every day and what our mentality was because it was the end of the season. I think you keep that same mentality of what we're trying to achieve every day. Even though now it's the 2026 season, it's all the same thought process about how we want to be us as Seahawks. And there are going to be different challenges that we're going to face along the road. We know that going in, but in no way are we saying that we're defending anything.

Let's just try to nail being us as well as we can, and stack those days. And then once we get to the season, we'll go from there.

SECOND CHANCES

WHAT'S BEHIND THE NEW ERA OF SUCCESSFUL RECLAMATION QUARTERBACKS?

BY DOUG FARRAR

Throughout most of pro football history, the general belief was that if a quarterback couldn't find his way with his first team, that was pretty much it. Teams weren't as patient with quarterbacks in eras when there were fewer franchises and the run game was more of a focus. There were reclamation quarterbacks in the pre-Super Bowl era — the Pittsburgh Steelers of the 1950s had future Hall of Famers Len Dawson and Johnny Unitas and ultimately watched them succeed elsewhere — but the trend in which quarterbacks are able to launder their early reputations and performances is a relatively recent one.

The most obvious earlier example is Jim Plunkett, the first overall pick in the 1971 NFL Draft, who wasn't able to showcase his talents fully with the New England Patriots, the team that drafted him. Plunkett spent the 1976 and '77 seasons as an unsuccessful starter with the San Francisco 49ers and the 1978 and '79 seasons as Ken Stabler's backup with the Oakland Raiders. But when the Raiders traded Stabler to the Houston Oilers for Dan Pastorini in a rare starting quarterback swap in March 1980, and Pastorini broke his leg in Week 5 of the 1980 season, Plunkett came off the bench in the perfect situation for his talents. He led the 1980 Raiders to victory in Super Bowl XV, and again in Super Bowl XVIII at the end of the 1983 season.

Nowadays, NFL teams are far more forgiving of a young quarterback's early foibles. Over the past few years, we've seen Jared Goff, Baker Mayfield, Geno Smith, Sam Darnold and Daniel Jones become more effective in their second (and sometimes third or more) stops.

Now it would seem that NFL teams are looking at those early failures as valuable testing grounds for the future, as opposed to career death sentences. As NFL passing games have become more complex and multi-dimensional, those first-contract disasters can be seen as extensions of the quarterback's college days.

"I think what you're looking for is a skill set you think you can work with, and some guys 'failed' in their first go-round because maybe their offense didn't suit their style of play," former NFL head coach and longtime quarterback developer Jay Gruden told *Athlon Sports*. "Maybe the personnel wasn't good around them; maybe they just weren't ready. It takes a long time to master the quarterback position, and when you have that experience of four or five years where you don't play quite so well, and then you're a free agent, and somebody takes another crack at you — it's good to have an experienced guy who's been through some ups and downs and through some turmoil and still has the ability to get better.

"A 26- or 27-year-old quarterback who's failed a little bit as a 22- or 23-year-old … that doesn't mean he's going to fail as a 27- or 28-year-old. He's just gaining valuable experience, and he has a skill set that people like, and they think they can work with him."

That seems to be the key to the NFL's renewed interest in reclamation quarterbacks. If you have a quarterback who has already been in the league for a while, you're taking a shot on the idea that his previous struggles didn't break him. And more often than not, over the past few years, it's worked.

In 2025, the most prominent example was Daniel Jones, who had washed out as the New York Giants' top pick (sixth overall) in 2019. Jones asked for his release from the Giants after he was benched for performance reasons in November 2024, and he spent most of the rest of that season as the Minnesota Vikings' practice squad quarterback before he was promoted to the active roster in January 2025.

Jones had the opportunity to work with Vikings head coach Kevin O'Connell, who already had one successful reclamation project in 2024 with Sam Darnold, and thus began Jones' second NFL career.

The Indianapolis Colts signed Jones to a one-year, $14 million contract to compete with Anthony Richardson Sr., whom the team had selected with the fourth overall pick in the 2023 draft, and who was struggling with all aspects of quarterback play that didn't involve running around and throwing the ball 100 miles per hour downfield. Jones won the preseason battle, and before he suffered a torn Achilles tendon in Week 14, he was a version of himself that nobody had seen before. Between working with O'Connell and Colts head coach/offensive shot-caller Shane Steichen, Jones experienced the mechanical fixes and gained the confidence that he had never enjoyed in the Big Apple. Now, Jones has a two-year, $88 million contract with $60 million in total guarantees, and his future looks bright in a way that nobody would have imagined a year ago.

Meanwhile, Darnold was off to the Seattle Seahawks on a three-year, $100.5 million contract with $55 million in total guarantees after he resuscitated his own career in Minnesota. The New York Jets' top pick (third overall) in the 2018 draft, Darnold never found his way with his first team and bounced between the Carolina Panthers, San Francisco 49ers and the Vikings, where O'Connell helped him become the quarterback he could be. Darnold effectively replaced Geno Smith, another former Jets disappointment who found a new (and better) home in the Emerald City — for a time.

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: MATT PENDLETON-IMAGN IMAGES; CREDIT: MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; JEFF HANISCH-IMAGN IMAGES

> YOU'VE GOT TO BE WILLING TO LET SOMEBODY HELP YOU.
>
> — MALIK WILLIS

"Well, Geno was a great competitor, and I think he was just an underrated thrower of the football," Seattle Seahawks head coach Mike Macdonald told *Athlon Sports*. "I mean, his accuracy was just ridiculous, and he took a lot of pride in his work. He's a great competitor. I mean, his record in the fourth quarter speaks pretty loudly about the type of player he is (Smith had 10 fourth-quarter comebacks as the Seahawks' starting quarterback from 2021-23). But I think we're on record now with what happened in the offseason when we pivoted away from Geno, and Sam became the option after the fact.

"I can just speak to Sam as a person — just from the day that he walked in the door to how we operated throughout the offseason, the rapport that he had with the players, he had a great reputation coming into the whole experience. He backed that up through who he was on a daily basis, and he's a great player on top of all those things. So yeah, we look pretty smart now, but in the moment, that's why we did it.

"And then you have to have faith in the process. I think there's got to be buy-in from all sides there when you venture into those uncharted waters, so to speak. Everybody involved in the process had a big hand in our success as a team last year. I mean, Sam's obviously the driver behind the whole thing with the way he played, but our offensive staff, and [Seahawks general manager] John [Schneider] and the rest of the people in our building had that support circle around him.

"Sam felt that buy-in, that trust from our end, and the support that he needed, so he could do his thing every day."

In 2026, the Miami Dolphins are hoping that former Tennessee Titans third-round pick Malik Willis can be the NFL's next great reclamation story. Willis did very little in his two years with the Titans, who traded him to the Green Bay Packers in August 2024 for a 2025 seventh-round pick. Willis saw action early in 2024 after starter Jordan Love suffered a left MCL sprain in the season opener, and for the season, he completed 40-of-54 passes for 550 yards, three touchdowns, no interceptions and a 124.8 passer rating. Willis was even better in head coach Matt LaFleur's offense in 2025, completing 30-of-35 passes for 422 yards, three touchdowns, no interceptions and a 145.5 passer rating.

The limited number of snaps over two years might be cautionary when you're talking about a right-now starting quarterback. But the difference-maker here, as it has been with most of these stories, is that when Willis found himself in a system where he could learn the NFL game at a very high level, he was a willing and able student.

"I mean, more than anything, in Tennessee, I kind of got thrown in the fire," Willis said this past December. "I wouldn't say I was ready yet. I hadn't seen that much. [It was] my first time being under center pretty much every single play almost — I didn't do that in college — and just understanding the different types of defenses that you'll see in the league versus college.

"Obviously, it's going to be more than 11 and 12 [personnel] in college, and we get into all these different personnel in Tennessee, and now you're seeing base [defense], now you're seeing sub [different defensive packages], now you're seeing dime [defense], and understanding what comes with that. I just wasn't ready at the time, and even on some of [the Packers'] plays, I was still trying to absorb it all. But you kind of get thrown out there, and for what it is, that's who you are. That's how the league works. Whatever you put on tape, that's who you are, regardless of if it's a good showing or not."

It also helps that general manager Jon-Eric Sullivan and head coach Jeff Hafley, both new to the Dolphins organization, came from the Packers, where they saw the entire Malik Willis reclamation story take place.

"Just how they go to work each and every day, and the way they treat people," Willis said of Sullivan and Hafley after he signed his three-year, $67.5 million deal with $45 million guaranteed. "I think that's more important than anything when you come to a business that relies on people. I see 'Haf' [Hafley] every day get excited when one of the [defensive backs] makes a play, or a defensive lineman gets a sack, or a 'backer bats the ball down, and he's just as excited as the players that are on the field.

"Then I see 'Sully' [Sullivan] in the hallway, and I always ask, 'What are you seeing out of my game?' Because I know [he watches] all the film in the world, and he'll give me details. It's not like, 'Oh, you're doing good. Just keep going.' It'll be specific details in order to help me get better, and I think that's important.

"You've got to be willing to let somebody help you."

Which, in the end, may be the ultimate key to quarterback redemption in the NFL. After all the trials and tribulations, and after everybody else has given up on your potential, you have to respond to the one voice in the wilderness who believes you're worth the effort.

Every quarterback on this list ultimately proved that he was.

WHO COULD BE THE NEXT RECLAMATION QUARTERBACK?

MAC **JONES**
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Brock Purdy is the 49ers' established starter, but he was also part of the team's unfortunate injury wave in 2025, and Jones completed 201-of-289 passes for 2,124 yards, 13 touchdowns, six interceptions and a 97.4 passer rating as Purdy's stand-in over eight starts. Jones isn't the most mobile quarterback, but he has above-average throwing traits, and he's smart enough to take command of head coach Kyle Shanahan's offensive system when necessary, which bodes well for his future — a future that looked in doubt when the New England Patriots, who selected Jones with the 15th overall pick in the 2021 draft, decided to look elsewhere after three seasons.

KYLER **MURRAY**
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

The Arizona Cardinals, who selected Murray with the first overall pick in the 2019 draft, released their former franchise quarterback on March 11, 2026, despite the fact that there were precious few other options at the position on the roster. One day later, Murray signed with the Vikings, which could put him on the same Kevin O'Connell Reclamation Trail previously walked by Sam Darnold and Daniel Jones. The advantage that Murray has is that J.J. McCarthy is by no means the Vikings' established starter, and Murray has more than a puncher's chance of coming out of training camp at the top of the depth chart.

TUA **TAGOVAILOA**
ATLANTA FALCONS

Tagovailoa was once the great quarterback hope of the Miami Dolphins, who haven't had a true franchise guy at the position since Dan Marino retired after the 1999 season. The Dolphins drafted Tagovailoa fifth overall in 2020, but the team decided to go in a different direction after six uneven seasons. Now, the Hawai'i native resides in Atlanta, hoping to beat out fellow lefty (and eighth overall pick in 2024) Michael Penix Jr. for the starting job.

JUSTIN **FIELDS**
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Fields, whom the Chicago Bears traded up to draft with the 11th overall pick in 2021, has had up-and-down performances with Chicago, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the New York Jets since. And he obviously isn't challenging Patrick Mahomes for anything. But Chiefs head coach Andy Reid has a remarkable history when it comes to making the most of his backup quarterbacks, going back to his days as the Philadelphia Eagles' head coach, and that could finally put Fields on the right path to success somewhere else in the NFL.

FROM TOP: TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI-IMAGN IMAGES; JOE RONDONE/THE REPUBLIC; CHARLES LECLAIRE-IMAGN IMAGES; VINCENT CARCHIETTA-IMAGN IMAGES

GRABBING THE SPOTLIGHT

BRETT DAVIS-IMAGN IMAGES

WE’RE IN A GOLDEN AGE OF WIDE RECEIVERS

BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

Jaxon Smith-Njigba led the NFL in 2025 with 1,793 receiving yards, earning the Seattle Seahawks’ third-year star a contract extension that makes him the highest-paid wide receiver in league history. Smith-Njigba’s yardage total was the eighth-best single-season total ever — but he’s far from alone when it comes to active receivers putting up video-game numbers.

Five active players own spots among the 10 best yardage seasons in NFL history. Two more are in the top 16. Pro Football Hall of Famer Calvin Johnson still owns the NFL record with 1,964 yards in 2012, but it feels like it’s only a matter of time before we see the first receiver to crack 2,000 yards, and there are any number of active players capable of accomplishing that feat.

As late as Week 13 of last season, Smith-Njigba was on pace to break Johnson’s single-season record and become the first 2,000-yard receiver. And while the Seahawks wideout still led the NFL in yards despite a late-season slowdown, Los Angeles Rams receiver Puka Nacua was not far behind. In fact, Nacua missed parts of three games due to injury and actually averaged nearly two yards more per game than JSN.

Johnson told *Athlon Sport*s last season that he wouldn’t be surprised to see someone break his record, sooner than later.

“If Puka has a great year with [Matthew] Stafford, he can,” said Johnson. Fittingly, Stafford was Johnson’s quarterback with the Detroit Lions when he set the single-season record — and he was the Rams quarterback when Cooper Kupp recorded the second-best yardage total with 1,947 yards in 2021.

Johnson also wouldn’t be surprised if it’s Smith-Njigba who breaks the record.

“If he can keep up what he’s doing, he should have a hell of a career,” Johnson said of JSN.

“Whoever does it, I hope it’s not a one-off, somebody just comes and does it and doesn’t do anything else,” Johnson added. “I hope it’s somebody like a Puka or one of these guys … somebody that’s been doing it that has a track record.”

Of course, Nacua and Smith-Njigba are by no means alone among an elite group of active receivers. There’s Justin Jefferson, Ja’Marr Chase, CeeDee Lamb, Amon-Ra St. Brown, A.J. Brown. Older veterans like Mike Evans and Stefon Diggs are still getting it done. Younger receivers like Tetairoa McMillan, Emeka Egbuka, Rome Odunze and Drake London are on the rise. Malik Nabers had a record-breaking rookie season in 2024 before before suffering a torn ACL and meniscus in 2025, so he’s looking for a return to form.

Simply put, this is a golden age for wide receivers.

“I do believe it is,” says Nate Burleson, a CBS Sports analyst and former NFL receiver who was a teammate of Johnson’s when he set the record in 2012. “Receivers nowadays are more talented than ever before.”

Burleson immediately brings up Jefferson and Chase. Jefferson was drafted by the Minnesota Vikings in 2020 and had 1,400 receiving yards as a rookie. In 2021, he did even better with 1,616 yards and 10 touchdown catches. But he shared the spotlight with Chase, his former LSU teammate, who was drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals in ’21 and recorded 1,455 receiving yards and 13 touchdowns as a rookie.

“Those two dudes are just so dominant,” says Burleson. “It’s funny that they were teammates at one point. But I just feel like this new wave of wideouts, it brings a smile to my face because you’re seeing all shapes and sizes, all forms.”

FROM LEFT: PUKA NACUA, JUSTIN JEFFERSON AND JA'MARR CHASE

When Jefferson and Chase put up those eye-popping yardage totals five years ago, they actually took a back seat to another wideout. Kupp had 1,947 receiving yards for the Rams that season — also tallying 145 catches and 16 touchdowns to record the receiving triple crown. Two other pass-catchers that season topped 1,400 yards: Davante Adams (1,553) and Deebo Samuel Sr. (1,405).

Since 2020, 15 different players have had at least 1,400 receiving yards in a season (including tight end Travis Kelce). Jefferson has done it four times, Chase three. Six other players — Adams, Tyreek Hill, Stefon Diggs, Brown, Nacua and St. Brown — have done it twice.

More importantly, these receivers aren't just putting up big numbers. They're putting up wins. After Smith-Njigba and Nacua combined for 3,508 receiving yards, both ended up in the NFC Championship Game. The Seahawks, of course, won that matchup and then destroyed the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LX.

"I just feel like the good teams will have a really good wide receiver on their squad," says Burleson. "I just feel like this golden age proves that you can have a superstar wideout and win. For a long time, you couldn't do both."

Wide receivers are faster and more athletic than ever, but Burleson points to another reason why there are so many elite wideouts in today's game.

"There's a lot you can attribute it to," he says. "It could be the coaching, the training, the success in high school and college. But I think you got to draw it back to these seven-on-seven leagues. And I don't know if every guy has participated in it, but seven-on-seven is just route-running. It's all route-running.

"That's all there is, is route-running. So, for example, a guy like me who played on teams that ran the ball up until I went to college, I started to become a better wide receiver the moment I stepped foot on campus my freshman year of college. There are some of these young guys that were good route-runners in the fifth grade. So that amount of time of just working on the nuances of the position, it really just proves to be the most beneficial thing for these young players once they get into the league."

On the other hand, as much as today's receivers benefit from seven-on-seven experience, they also have fully taken advantage of NFL rules that make it much harder for defenses to cover them. Any former receiver who had to deal with bump-and-run coverage will tell you they had it much tougher.

"Those guys were getting harassed off the line of scrimmage," says Burleson. "You could knock their block off if they were running blindly across the field. When the ball's in the air, you can clip them, flip them, hit them, grab them. I'm not saying pass interferences didn't exist or those penalties didn't exist then, but you could be a lot more physical back

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HANDS TEAM

There have been 16 occasions when an NFL receiver finished with at least 1,700 yards in a season. Half of those milestone years belong to active players:

PLAYER, TEAM	YEAR	YARDS
Calvin **JOHNSON**, Lions	2012	1,964
Cooper **KUPP**, Rams*	2021	1,947
Julio **JONES**, Falcons	2015	1,871
Jerry **RICE**, 49ers	1995	1,848
Antonio **BROWN**, Steelers	2015	1,834
Justin **JEFFERSON**, Vikings*	2022	1,809
Tyreek **HILL**, Dolphins*	2023	1,799
Jaxon **SMITH-NJIGBA**, Seahawks*	2025	1,793
Isaac **BRUCE**, Rams	1995	1,781
CeeDee **LAMB**, Cowboys*	2023	1,749
Charley **HENNIGAN**, Oilers	1961	1,746
Michael **THOMAS**, Saints	2019	1,725
Marvin **HARRISON**, Colts	2002	1,722
Puka **NACUA**, Rams*	2025	1,715
Tyreek **HILL**, Dolphins*	2022	1,710
Ja'Marr **CHASE**, Bengals*	2024	1,708

* Active players

> I JUST FEEL LIKE THIS NEW WAVE OF WIDEOUTS, IT BRINGS A SMILE TO MY FACE BECAUSE YOU'RE SEEING ALL SHAPES AND SIZES, ALL FORMS.
>
> — NATE BURLESON

in the day. Now, you have to give a guy room off the line of scrimmage.

"You can't really grab and pull and yank on them, or that flag is going up. Off the top of the route, sneaking, grabbing the hips and the jersey, they keep an eye on it now, but back in the day, they could care less."

There's more freedom in route-running now, which just makes it easier to play the game. Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receiver Jerry Rice — perhaps the greatest ever to play the position — agrees.

"If a receiver can't run a route on a guy that's eight yards off and no hard bump-and-run and stuff like that, then that individual shouldn't be a receiver," says Rice. "So things are a little bit, I'm not going to say easier, but you have more freedom coming off the line of scrimmage now."

That said, Rice does recognize that there are many great receivers playing today. While younger guys like Smith-Njigba and Nacua are coming on strong, Rice still thinks Jefferson is the best receiver in the NFL today.

"The number one is Justin Jefferson," he says. "Because he can do it all. You know, he can strike deep, he can go across the middle, he can catch the ball in stride, all of those things, and he just looks like there's no effort out on the football field. Like he's just out there running, and everything is so precise. But there are a lot of receivers that are getting it done underneath, like Puka. You know, those types of guys."

Jefferson is entering his seventh season in the NFL. He has stayed healthy for much of his career, which is why he already has 579 catches for 8,480 yards. Still a long way to go to catch the GOAT — Rice holds the all-time receiving triple crown records with 1,549 receptions for 22,895 yards and 197 touchdowns (41 touchdowns more than Randy Moss, who's second on that list). Of course, Rice played 20 seasons. And while it's not fair to expect anyone to play 20 years, Rice wants to see today's wideouts have a little more sustained success before crowning them.

"I base everything off longevity," Rice says. "I don't base everything off these guys, you know, having success so early and putting up great numbers. I want to see that sustainability."

Jefferson has had more sustained success than some of the other elite receivers in today's game, and what's amazing is that he's done it with a number of different quarterbacks. Assuming free-agent signee Kyler Murray takes over the job from J.J. McCarthy in 2026, Minnesota will have its fourth starting quarterback in the past four seasons. And that could be big news for Jefferson.

"I think he's going to have an amazing year with Kyler Murray," Burleson says. "I think Kyler Murray is going to take that starting position."

Jefferson's 1,048 receiving yards last season were the lowest total of his career — yet he was still one of 19 wide receivers with at least 1,000 yards. Amazingly, that's the lowest total of 1,000-yard receivers since 2020.

Burleson is quick to note that every era has had its share of all-world receivers — Rice, Moss, Terell Owens, Johnson. But it's hard to compete with how stacked the current crop of elite receivers has been.

"There are just so many good receivers in the NFL right now," he says.

KYLE TERADA-IMAGN IMAGES

CONNECTING THE DOTS

THE CHANGING FACE OF MODERN NFL DEFENSE

BY DOUG FARRAR

In their 29-13 win over the New England Patriots in Super Bowl LX, the Seattle Seahawks refused to play base defense. They played dime defense on 40 of their 72 defensive snaps, and because of their personnel, they were able to get away with it. Seattle's defense is filled with interior wrecking balls, an evil rotation of edge rushers, a linebacker in Ernest Jones IV who's versatile enough to be the only man at his position on the field, and more than one do-it-all defensive back who can shore things up when defending the run.

This aligns with recent NFL trends.

In 2025, six different teams (the Seahawks, Philadelphia Eagles, Los Angeles Rams, Los Angeles Chargers, San Francisco 49ers and Carolina Panthers) ran light boxes on more than 50% of their defensive snaps. Add in the increasing use of Cover-4 and Cover-6 alignments where teams pair two-high shells with match coverage principles underneath, and it creates a real need for linebacker/defensive back hybrids who can play both roles. There's no way that the Seahawks could have done what they did without rookie Nick Emmanwori in that role.

In their 40-22 win over the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LIX, the Eagles refused to blitz Patrick Mahomes. They didn't blitz a single time in their 56 defensive snaps, but they still disrupted Mahomes to the tune of six sacks and 30 total pressures. Instead of sending extra pass-rushers at Mahomes, the Eagles stunted their defensive linemen to an extreme degree, and it worked to great effect. Philly stunted its linemen 11 times in the game — two of their sacks and five of their pressures came as a result.

This also aligns with recent NFL trends.

The Eagles kept four defenders at the line of scrimmage on every snap (there were a handful of snaps in which linebacker Zack Baun did rush the passer, but always with a defensive lineman dropping back into coverage); they also had six or fewer defenders in the box on 52 of those 56 snaps. And they played with two-deep safeties on 36 of 56 plays.

Sorry if this sounds familiar, but the Eagles were able to get away with this because they had a defense filled with interior wrecking balls, an evil rotation of edge rushers, a linebacker in Baun who was versatile enough to be the only man at his position on the field, and more than one do-it-all defensive back who could shore things up when defending the run.

If you want to know how modern NFL defenses have changed in the past few years, look no further than the two most recent Super Bowls and the teams that won them.

Today's ideal defense is one in which fronts and coverages look relatively "vanilla" before the play and then can morph into just about anything once the ball is snapped. The value of this philosophy is that it gives the quarterback, and whoever's calling the protections, very little intel with which to work. With these structures, offenses are flying blind a lot of the time because they have to discern two different defenses on nearly every play — the one they appear to be getting pre-play and the one that actually happens post-snap. And those two looks can be radically different.

How are NFL coaches changing the face of their defenses so radically and making it work? With the cunning use of scheme and personnel. This has always been the case throughout pro football history; it's just that it's now being done with a decidedly 21st-century flavor.

POSITIONAL VERSATILITY

Once upon a time, defensive players who excelled at multiple positions were generally seen as jacks of all trades and masters of none. The NFL wanted fixed positional definition in eras when defensive structures were more basic because the offenses coaches were trying to solve were also more rudimentary. Now, that kind of positional versatility is not only accepted but also favored — and in some defenses, absolutely mandatory. If you're playing only one position on defense, you'd better be playing it at a very high level, or you'll find yourself subbed out for someone who can either be great in one place or really good in two or more.

> IF YOU CAN HAVE THAT **POSITIONAL FLEXIBILITY** NOW, IT JUST BENEFITS YOUR TEAM AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH.
>
> — CAMERON HEYWARD

In the 2025 season, 53 NFL players played at least 200 snaps at more than one defensive position. And five players logged at least that many snaps in three spots. That flexibility came in all manner of ways.

- Dax Hill of the Cincinnati Bengals — 951 total snaps at cornerback (387), slot defender (363) and box defender (201).
- Jessie Bates III of the Atlanta Falcons — 873 total snaps at free safety (405), strong safety (257) and box defender (211).
- Grant Delpit of the Cleveland Browns — 793 total snaps at slot defender (304), box defender (270) and free safety (219).
- Budda Baker of the Arizona Cardinals — 776 total snaps at free safety (314), box defender (245) and slot defender (217).
- Jalen Redmond of the Minnesota Vikings — 728 total snaps at defensive tackle (258), defensive end (241) and edge defender (229).

Pittsburgh Steelers defensive lineman Cameron Heyward, a 15-year NFL veteran with seven Pro Bowls and four first-team All-Pro nods to his name, has long been the type of player you could align at any gap in a line with great success. Now, Heyward is seeing that kind of multi-position wisdom everywhere on defense.

"I think versatility is at an all-time high," Heyward told *Athlon Sports*. "And it's not just for my position now. I think a lot of times, we saw the linebacker position only being one way. Now, you see safeties playing like linebackers. And I think everybody's relished these opportunities.

"Just watching the Super Bowl, you watch [Seahawks defensive back Nick] Emmanwori. If you can have that positional flexibility now, it just benefits your team at an all-time high. More teams have better defenses because they're adjusting to their players, rather than the structure where the player has to adjust. And I think it's benefiting teams at a higher level."

Emmanwori is a great example. He was a second-round pick for the Seahawks in 2025 out of South Carolina, and at 6-foot-3 and 220 pounds, he was the perfect catalyst for Seahawks head coach and defensive play-caller Mike Macdonald's lighter fronts and two-high "shell" safety looks with match coverage underneath. As a prototypical "big safety," Emmanwori was a linebacker in the box but with slot and safety responsibilities as well.

Seahawks assistant head coach Leslie Frazier, whose playing career hit its peak when he led the legendary 1985 Chicago Bears defense with six interceptions and whose

NFL coaching career began in 1999, told *Athlon Sports* why the Emmanwori-style player is so crucial to modern defensive success.

"Part of it is that the rules in the NFL are so liberal for the offense when it comes to contact and coverage," Frazier said. "A lot of teams will try to spread you out and create mismatches [on offense]. One of the ways to offset that is to have hybrid-type players who can play out in space and not just be a box safety, for instance. Have the ability to cover, but can still get close to the line of scrimmage, and tackle like a linebacker as well."

This is also why the three highest-ranked "safeties" in the 2026 NFL Draft were all multi-position players in their own ways.

- Ohio State's Caleb Downs, selected 11th overall by the Dallas Cowboys — 627 total snaps at box defender (241), free safety (240) and slot defender (146).
- Oregon's Dillon Thieneman, selected 25th overall by the Bears — 799 total snaps at box defender (434), free safety (247) and slot defender (118).
- Toledo's Emmanuel McNeil-Warren, selected 58th overall by the Browns — 632 total snaps at box defender (401), free safety (198) and slot defender (33).

CALEB DOWNS, DILLON THIENEMAN AND EMMANUEL McNEIL-WARREN

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CHRIS JONES-IMAGN IMAGES; KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI-IMAGN IMAGES; KEN BLAZE-IMAGN IMAGES

> A LOT OF TEAMS WILL TRY TO SPREAD YOU OUT AND CREATE MISMATCHES [ON OFFENSE]. ONE OF THE WAYS TO OFFSET THAT IS TO HAVE HYBRID-TYPE PLAYERS WHO CAN PLAY OUT IN SPACE AND NOT JUST BE A BOX SAFETY.
>
> – LESLIE FRAZIER

STUNTS OVER BLITZES

Everybody loves to watch the destruction that a successful blitz inflicts on the offense, but in the modern NFL, the people calling those defenses are seeing the value in keeping their personnel stable. Now, defensive coordinators want their pass rush to come from concepts that are more consistent than blitzes, which leave gaps in coverage when extra defenders are moving against the quarterback.

This is why we've seen an increase in the use of stunts, in which defensive linemen exchange gaps post-snap, leaving offensive linemen and other blockers to figure out who they're supposed to deal with. It's not always an easy calculation. Stunts also work well against the run, but teams are really loading them up against the pass.

Why? Because with stunts, the combination of pressure and coverage is simply more effective:

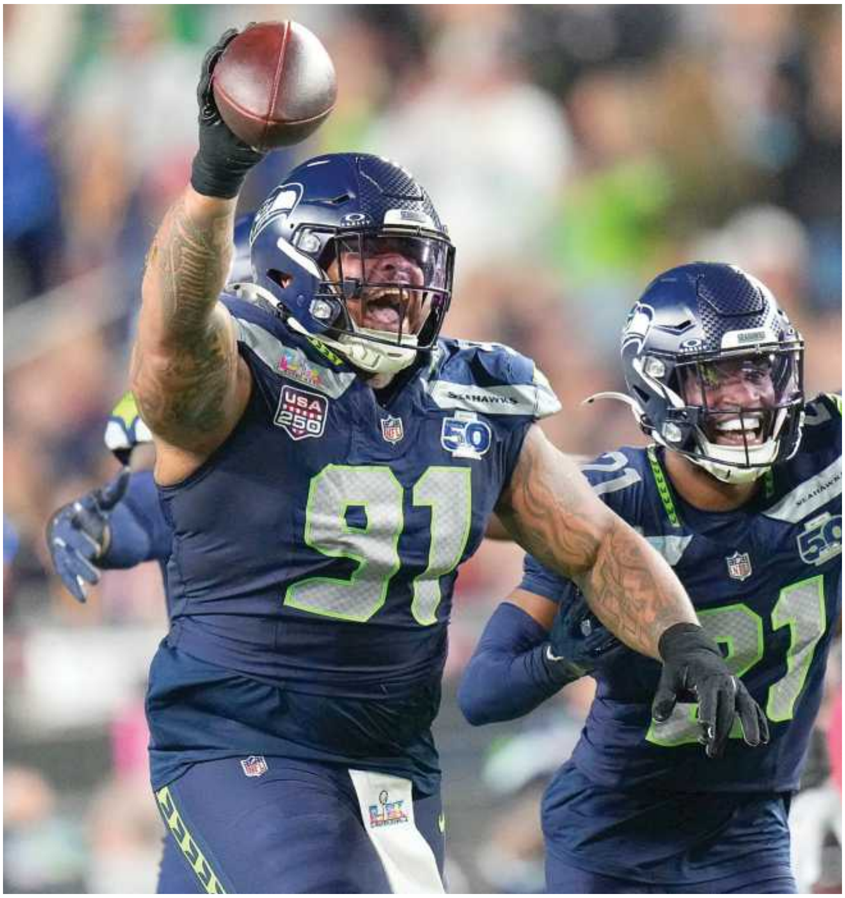
- When NFL teams blitzed in 2025, they allowed 2,778 completions in 4,516 attempts (61.5%) for 7.30 yards per attempt, 304 touchdowns (6.7%), 89 interceptions (2.0%) and an 8.1% sack rate (396 sacks on 4,912 dropbacks).
- When defenses stunted instead, they allowed 2,902 completions in 4,670 attempts (62.1%) for 7.44 yards per attempt, 159 touchdowns (3.4%), 122 interceptions (2.6%) and a 9.0% sack rate (464 sacks on 5,134 dropbacks).

Any concept that can cut your rate of touchdowns allowed in half while actually increasing your sack rate? Well, what defensive coordinator wouldn't sign up for that?

COVERAGE SWITCHES

Another clear defensive trend over the past few years is the backfield equivalent of the stunt — pre- and post-snap coverage switches in which defensive backs show offenses one coverage look before the play and something decidedly different after the snap. These switches have been around pro football for decades to a degree, but they've really come into prominence in recent years.

Over the past few seasons, post-snap coverage switches have held fairly steady from a rate perspective — 27% in 2022, 26.7% in 2023, 28.6% in 2024 and 27.8% in 2025. What we have seen more of in the past few draft cycles is the increasing



SEATTLE DEFENSIVE TACKLE BYRON MURPHY JR.

KYLE TERADA-IMAGN IMAGES

value of defensive backs who are capable of starting in the deep third and coming down to support short and intermediate defenders — and the obvious reverse, defenders who can start in the box or the slot and haul it back to the deep third in a big hurry.

From Minkah Fitzpatrick to Derwin James Jr. to Kyle Hamilton to Brian Branch, these multi-layer defenders are more important than they've ever been, especially because they're no longer sub-package guys in an era when sub-packages (everything from nickel to big nickel to dime) have become base concepts for more and more defenses.

How did passing games perform against these sleights of hand last season? The results were interesting. Offenses had a higher completion rate (65.6% vs. 64.1%), a higher yards per attempt (7.37 vs. 6.90), a lower interception rate (2.1% vs. 2.2%) and an identical sack rate (6.9%). Where things changed for the better for defenses was in the most important column — against static coverages, quarterbacks had a 6.1% touchdown rate, and that rate plummeted to 2.2% against disguised coverages.

For that reason alone, defensive coaches will deal with the occasional coverage busts that come from disguised coverages and can have defenders playing in disadvantageous spots if the assignments aren't executed to perfection. Coverage switches can fool the guys who are covering, too.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTION

Right after their respective Super Bowl wins, both Baun of the Eagles and Julian Love of the Seahawks told me that the real key to modern defense is for everybody on the field to know what everybody else is doing.

"I think Vic [Eagles defensive coordinator Vic Fangio] does a good job of telling us where our help is and what leverage we should play," Baun said. "We've always got help. When I'm out there, I trust my own tackling ability, but I also trust that Coop [defensive back Cooper DeJean] is going to come down and make the tackle with me, or Oren [linebacker Oren Burks] is going to come down and make the tackle with me."

Love spoke to both the talent on Seattle's roster and the connections therein.

"To be able to run the scheme that we do and have success the way we have, it just takes talent," Love said. "It starts up front. [Defensive tackle] Byron Murphy Jr., he's the heartbeat of our defense. Him, Leonard Williams, Jarran Reed up front, the depth that we have in the interior, then our edge killers. You see Boye [Mafe], you see [Derick] Hall, you see D-Law [DeMarcus Lawrence], they just make plays, so it starts up front. And the linebackers, Ernest [Jones IV] is our leader, our captain. Him and [fellow linebacker] Drake [Thomas] have been playing good ball.

"And then I would say our rookie man, having our rookie, 'Demonwori' [safety Emmanwori], him and Spoon [Devon Witherspoon], playing that slot role, they're killers. They're some of the best players in this league, and so allowing that to happen when they can be stout for us against the run, having our four down linemen be stout for us against the run, it allows me and [safety] Coby [Bryant] and our corners to be free. It's talent."

It is about talent to a degree, but to play truly great defense in the modern NFL, all three levels must be connected, and the positional overlaps must be managed, at the proverbial next level.

If you're not playing defense this way in 2026 and beyond, you are playing from behind before the games begin.

All advanced metrics courtesy of Pro Football Focus, Sports Info Solutions and Sumer Sports.

2026

DRAFT RECAP

NFL DRAFT PICKS

ROUND 1

1	Raiders	Fernando Mendoza	QB	Indiana
2	Jets	David Bailey	Edge	Texas Tech
3	Cardinals	Jeremiyah Love	RB	Notre Dame
4	Titans	Carnell Tate	WR	Ohio State
5	Giants	Arvell Reese	Edge	Ohio State
6	Chiefs	Mansoor Delane	CB	LSU
7	Commanders	Sonny Styles	LB	Ohio State
8	Saints	Jordyn Tyson	WR	Arizona State
9	Browns	Spencer Fano	OT	Utah
10	Giants	Francis Mauigoa	G	Miami (Fla.)
11	Cowboys	Caleb Downs	S	Ohio State
12	Dolphins	Kadyn Proctor	OT	Alabama
13	Rams	Ty Simpson	QB	Alabama
14	Ravens	Olaivavega Ioane	G	Penn State
15	Buccaneers	Rueben Bain Jr.	Edge	Miami (Fla.)
16	Jets	Kenyon Sadiq	TE	Oregon
17	Lions	Blake Miller	OT	Clemson
18	Vikings	Caleb Banks	DT	Florida
19	Panthers	Monroe Freeling	OT	Georgia
20	Eagles	Makai Lemon	WR	USC
21	Steelers	Max Iheanachor	OT	Arizona State
22	Chargers	Akheem Mesidor	Edge	Miami (Fla.)
23	Cowboys	Malachi Lawrence	Edge	UCF
24	Browns	KC Concepcion	WR	Texas A&M
25	Bears	Dillon Thieneman	S	Oregon
26	Texans	Keylan Rutledge	G	Georgia Tech
27	Dolphins	Chris Johnson	CB	San Diego St.
28	Patriots	Caleb Lomu	OT	Utah
29	Chiefs	Peter Woods	DT	Clemson
30	Jets	Omar Cooper Jr.	WR	Indiana
31	Titans	Keldric Faulk	Edge	Auburn
32	Seahawks	Jadarian Price	RB	Notre Dame

1.01 FERNANDO MENDOZA
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

1.02 DAVID BAILEY • NEW YORK JETS

ROUND 2

33	49ers	De'Zhaun Stribling	WR	Ole Miss
34	Cardinals	Chase Bisontis	G	Texas A&M
35	Bills	TJ Parker	Edge	Clemson
36	Texans	Kayden McDonald	DT	Ohio State
37	Giants	Colton Hood	CB	Tennessee
38	Raiders	Treydan Stukes	S	Arizona
39	Browns	Denzel Boston	WR	Washington
40	Chiefs	R Mason Thomas	Edge	Oklahoma
41	Bengals	Cashius Howell	Edge	Texas A&M
42	Saints	Christen Miller	DT	Georgia
43	Dolphins	Jacob Rodriguez	LB	Texas Tech
44	Lions	Derrick Moore	Edge	Michigan
45	Ravens	Zion Young	OLB	Missouri
46	Buccaneers	Josiah Trotter	LB	Missouri
47	Steelers	Germie Bernard	WR	Alabama
48	Falcons	Avieon Terrell	CB	Clemson
49	Panthers	Lee Hunter	DT	Texas Tech
50	Jets	D'Angelo Ponds	CB	Indiana
51	Vikings	Jake Golday	LB	Cincinnati
52	Packers	Brandon Cisse	CB	South Carolina
53	Colts	CJ Allen	LB	Georgia
54	Eagles	Eli Stowers	TE	Vanderbilt
55	Patriots	Gabe Jacas	Edge	Illinois
56	Jaguars	Nate Boerkircher	TE	Texas A&M
57	Bears	Logan Jones	C	Iowa
58	Browns	Emm. McNeil-Warren	S	Toledo
59	Texans	Marlin Klein	TE	Michigan
60	Titans	Anthony Hill Jr.	LB	Texas
61	Rams	Max Klare	TE	Ohio State
62	Bills	Davison Igbinosun	CB	Ohio State
63	Chargers	Jake Slaughter	C	Florida
64	Seahawks	Bud Clark	S	TCU

1.03 JEREMIYAH LOVE • ARIZONA CARDINALS

ROUND 3

65	Cardinals	Carson Beck	QB	Miami (Fla.)
66	Broncos	Tyler Onyedim	DT	Texas A&M
67	Raiders	Keyron Crawford	DE	Auburn
68	Eagles	Markel Bell	OT	Miami (Fla.)
69	Bears	Sam Roush	TE	Stanford
70	49ers	Romello Height	Edge	Texas Tech
71	Commanders	Antonio Williams	WR	Clemson
72	Bengals	Tacario Davis	CB	Washington
73	Saints	Oscar Delp	TE	Georgia
74	Giants	Malachi Fields	WR	Notre Dame
75	Dolphins	Caleb Douglas	WR	Texas Tech
76	Steelers	Drew Allar	QB	Penn State
77	Packers	Chris McClellan	DT	Missouri
78	Colts	A.J. Haulcy	S	LSU
79	Falcons	Zachariah Branch	WR	Georgia
80	Ravens	Ja'Kobi Lane	WR	USC
81	Jaguars	Albert Regis	DT	Texas A&M
82	Vikings	Domonique Orange	DT	Iowa State
83	Panthers	Chris Brazzell II	WR	Tennessee
84	Buccaneers	Ted Hurst	WR	Georgia State
85	Steelers	Daylen Everette	CB	Georgia
86	Browns	Austin Barber	OT	Florida
87	Dolphins	Will Kacmarek	TE	Ohio State
88	Jaguars	Emmanuel Pregnon	G	Oregon
89	Bears	Zavion Thomas	WR	LSU
90	49ers	Kaelon Black	RB	Indiana
91	Raiders	Trey Zuhn III	G	Texas A&M
92	Cowboys	Jaishawn Barham	Edge	Michigan
93	Rams	Keagen Trost	OT	Missouri
94	Dolphins	Chris Bell	WR	Louisville
95	Patriots	Eli Raridon	TE	Notre Dame
96	Steelers	Gennings Dunker	G	Iowa
97	Vikings	Caleb Tiernan	OT	Northwestern
98	Vikings	Jakobe Thomas	S	Miami (Fla.)
99	Seahawks	Julian Neal	CB	Arkansas
100	Jaguars	Jalen Huskey	S	Maryland

OPPOSITE: ROBERT GODDIN-IMAGN IMAGES; FROM LEFT: MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; MICHAEL CATERINA-IMAGN IMAGES

1.04 CARNELL TATE • TENNESSEE TITANS

ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

ROUND 4

101	Raiders	Jermod McCoy	CB	Tennessee
102	Bills	Jude Bowry	OT	Boston College
103	Jets	Darrell Jackson Jr.	DT	Florida State
104	Cardinals	Kaleb Proctor	DT	SE Louisiana
105	Chargers	Brenen Thompson	WR	Mississippi St.
106	Texans	Febechi Nwaiwu	G	Oklahoma
107	49ers	Gracen Halton	DT	Oklahoma
108	Broncos	Jonah Coleman	RB	Washington
109	Chiefs	Jadon Canady	CB	Oregon
110	Jets	Cade Klubnik	QB	Clemson
111	Broncos	Kage Casey	OT	Boise State
112	Cowboys	Drew Shelton	OT	Penn State
113	Colts	Jalen Farmer	G	Kentucky
114	Cowboys	Devin Moore	CB	Florida
115	Ravens	Elijah Sarratt	WR	Indiana
116	Buccaneers	Keionte Scott	CB	Miami (Fla.)
117	Chargers	Travis Burke	OT	Memphis
118	Lions	Jimmy Rolder	LB	Michigan
119	Jaguars	Wesley Williams	Edge	Duke
120	Packers	Dani Dennis-Sutton	Edge	Penn State
121	Steelers	Kaden Wetjen	WR	Iowa
122	Raiders	Mike Washington Jr.	RB	Arkansas
123	Texans	Wade Woodaz	LB	Clemson
124	Bears	Malik Muhammad	CB	Texas
125	Bills	Skyler Bell	WR	UConn
126	Bills	Kaleb Elarms-Orr	LB	TCU
127	49ers	Carver Willis	OT	Washington
128	Bengals	Connor Lew	C	Auburn
129	Panthers	Will Lee III	CB	Texas A&M
130	Dolphins	Trey Moore	LB	Texas
131	Chargers	Genesis Smith	S	Arizona
132	Saints	Jeremiah Wright	G	Auburn
133	Ravens	Matthew Hibner	TE	SMU
134	Falcons	Kendal Daniels	LB	Oklahoma

ROUND 4, CONT.

135	Colts	Bryce Boettcher	LB	Oregon
136	Saints	Bryce Lance	WR	North Dakota St.
137	Cowboys	LT Overton	Edge	Alabama
138	Dolphins	Kyle Louis	LB	Pitt
139	49ers	Ephesians Prysock	CB	Washington
140	Bengals	Colbie Young	WR	Georgia

ROUND 5

141	Texans	Kamari Ramsey	S	USC
142	Titans	Fernando Carmona	G	Arkansas
143	Cardinals	Reggie Virgil	WR	Texas Tech
144	Panthers	Sam Hecht	C	Kansas State
145	Chargers	Nick Barrett	DT	South Carolina
146	Browns	Parker Brailsford	C	Alabama
147	Commanders	Joshua Josephs	Edge	Tennessee
148	Seahawks	Beau Stephens	G	Iowa
149	Browns	Justin Jefferson	LB	Alabama
150	Raiders	Dalton Johnson	S	Arizona
151	Panthers	Zakee Wheatley	S	Penn State
152	Broncos	Justin Joly	TE	NC State
153	Packers	Jager Burton	C	Kentucky
154	49ers	Jaden Dugger	LB	Louisiana
155	Buccaneers	DeMonte Capehart	DT	Clemson
156	Colts	George Gumbs Jr.	Edge	Florida
157	Lions	Keith Abney II	CB	Arizona State
158	Dolphins	Michael Taaffe	S	Texas
159	Vikings	Max Bredeson	FB	Michigan
160	Buccaneers	Billy Schrauth	G	Notre Dame
161	Chiefs	Emmett Johnson	RB	Nebraska
162	Ravens	Chandler Rivers	CB	Duke
163	Vikings	Charles Demmings	CB	Stephen F. Austin
164	Jaguars	Tanner Koziol	TE	Houston
165	Titans	Nicholas Singleton	RB	Penn State
166	Bears	Keyshaun Elliott	LB	Arizona State
167	Bills	Jalon Kilgore	S	South Carolina
168	Lions	Kendrick Law	WR	Kentucky
169	Steelers	Riley Nowakowski	TE	Indiana
170	Browns	Joe Royer	TE	Cincinnati
171	Patriots	Karon Prunty	CB	Wake Forest
172	Saints	Lorenzo Styles Jr.	S	Ohio State
173	Ravens	Josh Cuevas	TE	Alabama
174	Ravens	Adam Randall	RB	Clemson
175	Raiders	Hezekiah Masses	CB	Cal
176	Chiefs	Cyrus Allen	WR	Cincinnati
177	Dolphins	Kevin Coleman Jr.	WR	Missouri
178	Eagles	Cole Payton	QB	North Dakota St.
179	49ers	Enrique Cruz Jr.	OT	Kansas
180	Dolphins	Seydou Traore	TE	Mississippi St.
181	Bills	Zane Durant	DT	Penn State

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ROUND 6

182	Browns	Taylen Green	QB	Arkansas
183	Cardinals	Karson Sharar	LB	Iowa
184	Titans	Jackie Marshall	DT	Baylor
185	Buccaneers	Bauer Sharp	TE	LSU
186	Giants	Bobby Jamison-Travis	DT	Auburn
187	Commanders	Kaytron Allen	RB	Penn State
188	Jets	Anez Cooper	G	Miami (Fla.)
189	Bengals	Brian Parker II	C	Duke
190	Saints	Barion Brown	WR	LSU
191	Jaguars	Josh Cameron	WR	Baylor
192	Giants	J.C. Davis	OT	Illinois
193	Giants	Jack Kelly	LB	BYU
194	Titans	Pat Coogan	C	Indiana
195	Raiders	Malik Benson	WR	Oregon
196	Patriots	Dametrious Crownover	OT	Texas A&M
197	Rams	CJ Daniels	WR	Miami (Fla.)
198	Vikings	Demond Claiborne	RB	Wake Forest
199	Seahawks	Emmanuel Henderson Jr.	WR	Kansas
200	Dolphins	DJ Campbell	G	Texas
201	Packers	Domani Jackson	CB	Alabama
202	Chargers	Logan Taylor	G	Boston College
203	Jaguars	C.J. Williams	WR	Stanford
204	Texans	Lewis Bond	WR	Boston College
205	Lions	Skyler Gill-Howard	DT	Texas Tech
206	Chargers	Alex Harkey	G	Oregon
207	Eagles	Micah Morris	G	Georgia
208	Falcons	Anterio Thompson	DT	Washington
209	Commanders	Matt Gulbin	C	Michigan State
210	Steelers	Gabe Rubio	DE	Notre Dame
211	Ravens	Ryan Eckley	P	Michigan State

ROUND 6, CONT.

212	Patriots	Namdi Obiazor	LB	TCU
213	Bears	Jordan van den Berg	DT	Georgia Tech
214	Colts	Caden Curry	Edge	Ohio State
215	Falcons	Harold Perkins Jr.	LB	LSU
216	Packers	Trey Smack	K	Florida

ROUND 7

217	Cardinals	Jayden Williams	OT	Ole Miss
218	Cowboys	Anthony Smith	WR	East Carolina
219	Saints	TJ Hall	CB	Iowa
220	Bills	Toriano Pride Jr.	CB	Missouri
221	Bengals	Jack Endries	TE	Texas
222	Lions	Tyre West	DT	Tennessee
223	Commanders	Athan Kaliakmanis	QB	Rutgers
224	Steelers	Robert Spears-Jennings	S	Oklahoma
225	Titans	Jaren Kanak	TE	Oklahoma
226	Bengals	Landon Robinson	DT	Navy
227	Panthers	Jackson Kuwatch	LB	Miami (Ohio)
228	Jets	VJ Payne	S	Kansas State
229	Raiders	Brandon Cleveland	DT	NC State
230	Steelers	Eli Heidenreich	RB	Navy
231	Falcons	Ethan Onianwa	OT	Ohio State
232	Rams	Tim Keenan III	DT	Alabama
233	Jaguars	Zach Durfee	Edge	Washington
234	Patriots	Behren Morton	QB	Texas Tech
235	Vikings	Gavin Gerhardt	C	Cincinnati
236	Seahawks	Andre Fuller	CB	Toledo
237	Colts	Seth McGowan	RB	Kentucky
238	Dolphins	Max Llewellyn	DE	Iowa
239	Bills	Tommy Doman Jr.	P	Florida
240	Jaguars	Parker Hughes	LB	M. Tennessee
241	Bills	Ar'maj Reed-Adams	G	Texas A&M
242	Seahawks	Deven Eastern	DT	Minnesota
243	Texans	Aiden Fisher	LB	Indiana
244.	Eagles	Cole Wisniewski	S	Texas Tech
245	Patriots	Jam Miller	RB	Alabama
246	Broncos	Miles Scott	S	Illinois
247	Patriots	Quintayvious Hutchins	Edge	Boston College
248	Browns	Carsen Ryan	TE	BYU
249	Chiefs	Garrett Nussmeier	QB	LSU
250	Ravens	Rayshaun Benny	DT	Michigan
251	Eagles	Uar Bernard	DT	Nigeria
252	Eagles	Keyshawn James-Newby	Edge	New Mexico
253	Ravens	Evan Beerntsen	G	Northwestern
254	Colts	Deion Burks	WR	Oklahoma
255	Seahawks	Michael Dansby	CB	Arizona
256	Broncos	Dallen Bentley	TE	Utah
257	Broncos	Red Murdock	LB	Buffalo

2026

NFL DRAFT RECAP

NFL DRAFT
PITTSBURGH
2026
BUD LIGHT
DRAFT

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

STEEL CITY REIGNS SUPREME

BY MICHAEL BRADLEY

Anybody who doubted the power of football — and the Pittsburgh Steelers — in western Pennsylvania needed only to see the incredible turnout at the 2026 NFL Draft.

Pittsburgh set a new three-day attendance record for the draft, attracting 805,000 people to the event. That exceeded the 775,000 people who showed up for the 2024 draft in Detroit. Pittsburgh also set a single-day mark when 320,000 attended the first day.

The region's love of its team and the sport was the main reason for the record numbers. But Pittsburgh's approach to the draft was also extremely intentional. With Acrisure Stadium as the backdrop, the league constructed a mammoth stage along the North Shore, creating an enormous area for fans. Some even watched on the video scoreboards inside the stadium.

Across the Allegheny River in Point State Park, the NFL Draft Experience sprung up and attracted huge crowds with attractions like Steelers Country; concerts featuring Wiz Khalifa, Kane Brown and Bret Michaels; an NFL Films-produced movie about the history of football in western Pennsylvania; and food and beverage stations and abundant merchandise options.

Despite rain and cool temperatures on Saturday, fans still came out in droves. And thanks to the record numbers, there is a high bar for future draft sites to clear. The next chance comes in April 2027, when the NFL debuts at the National Mall and on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C., where Washington Commanders owner Josh Harris is aiming to attract more than a million people. That would be incredible. But it hasn't happened yet. For now, Pittsburgh remains the champ.

BUCKEYE BONANZA

The last time any school had four players selected in the first 11 picks of the NFL Draft was in 1967, when Bubba Smith, Clint Jones, George Webster and Gene Washington of Michigan State were chosen in the first eight picks of the inaugural NFL-AFL common draft. The only other time it happened was in 1946, when four Notre Dame players, including future Hall of Famer George Connor, went in the top 10.

On April 23, Ohio State joined that select company. The Tennessee Titans chose wideout Carnell Tate fourth overall, and the New York Giants followed with linebacker Arvell Reese. Linebacker Sonny Styles went seventh to the Washington Commanders, and the Dallas Cowboys traded up and then selected safety Caleb Downs 11th.

It was an impressive haul from a

school that reached the quarterfinals of the 2025 College Football Playoff and won the 2024 national title.

Some were surprised that Tate went fourth overall, in part because Jeremiah Smith was the leading OSU receiver, and in part because Tate posted a pedestrian 4.53 40-yard dash time at the NFL Scouting Combine, hardly a blazing performance. The Titans were no doubt impressed by Tate's production, which included nine TDs and a 17.2-yard average on his 51 receptions in '25.

Reese posted 6.5 sacks and 69 tackles last season, while Styles led the Buckeyes with 82 stops. Downs, who transferred to OSU from Alabama after the 2023 season, was widely considered one of the most cerebral players in the country last year and also registered 68 tackles.

Ohio State finished with 11 players selected, the most in the 2026 Draft. Here's the breakdown of schools with the most picks:

11	OHIO STATE
10	ALABAMA, TEXAS A&M
9	CLEMSON, MIAMI (FLA.), TEXAS TECH
8	GEORGIA, INDIANA, PENN STATE
7	FLORIDA, IOWA, LSU, OKLAHOMA, OREGON, WASHINGTON
6	MICHIGAN, MISSOURI, NOTRE DAME, TEXAS

FROM TOP: KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; KEVIN NG-IMAGN IMAGES

TY SIMPSON (ABOVE) AND SEAN McVAY

QB SURPRISE

When NFL commissioner Roger Goodell announced that the Los Angeles Rams had chosen Alabama quarterback Ty Simpson with the 13th overall pick, Rams head coach Sean McVay looked like he had been told his offense had to run the wishbone this year. While other head coaches grinned and high-fived everyone in the draft room after their first-round picks were announced, McVay looked indifferent, something that led observers to hypothesize he was unhappy with the selection. A press conference with general manager Les Snead and a rather testy McVay only fueled the speculation.

Despite McVay's comments that 38-year-old Matthew Stafford could play for LA as long as he wanted, Simpson's arrival seemingly sent a signal to the reigning NFL MVP that the team was making plans to move on. Others were surprised that the Rams chose Simpson so early. He had received first-round grades from some, but few thought he would go that soon.

Reports surfaced that Simpson had met secretly with McVay before the draft, which made the choice seem more logical. And though McVay's face didn't signal great enthusiasm, it was reported that neither he nor Snead had the ability to make a high draft choice without significant buy-in from the other. Yes, Snead has a relationship with Simpson's father, a college coach, but that alone wasn't enough to make Simpson the first-round pick. McVay had to be on board.

Still, the Rams have pressing needs at offensive tackle and receiver, so choosing Simpson in the first round was a bit curious. But the team addressed those needs in later rounds. The question now is how long Simpson must wait to get a shot at the starting job. Though Stafford's contract was not settled as of draft night, it's highly unlikely there will be a problem in the twilight of his career. And given McVay's affinity for his QB, it could be two or three years before Simpson is QB1.

JEREMIYAH LOVE

LOVE STORY

It wasn't hard to find draft analysts who believed that Notre Dame running back Jeremiyah Love was the best prospect available. He finished the 2025 season with 1,372 rushing yards, and 21 total touchdowns, 18 of those on the ground. Love showed that he could run through and away from people, and his highly developed pass-catching skills completed the package.

The Arizona Cardinals chose Love third overall and made him the first back chosen in the top five since the New York Giants took Penn State's Saquon Barkley in 2018. That gap demonstrates the league's continuing trepidation about selecting runners early on. When Atlanta chose Bijan Robinson eighth overall in 2023, some criticized the move. But Robinson has rushed for 3,910 yards during his three seasons, including 1,478 in 2025.

The Cardinals can certainly use a boost to their ground attack. Arizona managed just 93.1 rushing yards per game last year, 31st in the NFL. Their leading rusher, Michael Carter, managed only 333 yards. The Cards needed Love badly. Even though the franchise isn't completely sure who its starting quarterback will be this year, it has a front-line running back ready to go. And even though Love will be known mostly for his ability to run — and break the occasional big play — he averaged 9.4 yards per reception during his time at ND and should be a big weapon out of the backfield.

FROM TOP: MICHAEL CATERINA-IMAGN IMAGES

CONFERENCE CALL

The last time the SEC did not have the most players drafted in the first round out of all college conferences was 2015, when both the ACC and Pac-12 had nine players selected. The conference's streak ended in '26, when the Big Ten had 10 players among the first 32 chosen.

Ohio State had the aforementioned four players picked in the first 11. Indiana had two players taken — quarterback Fernando Mendoza (No. 1 overall) and wideout Omar Cooper Jr. (30th). Oregon also had two first-rounders, tight end Kenyon Sadiq (16th) and safety Dillon Thieneman (25th). Penn State guard Olaivavega Ioane, who went 14th, and USC wide receiver Makai Lemon, who went 20th, completed the Big Ten's opening-round haul.

Here's the conference Round 1 breakdown:

10 BIG TEN	7 SEC
6 ACC	6 BIG 12
2 NOTRE DAME	1 MWC

KENYON SADIQ

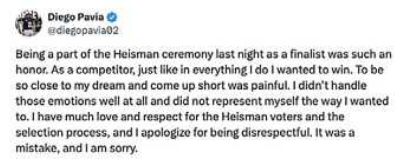
SLIP, SLIDING AWAY

Maybe it was his off-putting behavior after not winning the Heisman Trophy. Perhaps it was the fact that he didn't have an agent. Or it could have been his height: a shade over 5-foot-10 at the NFL Scouting Combine.

Whatever the causes, it wasn't a happy draft weekend for Vanderbilt quarterback Diego Pavia. The Heisman runner-up went unselected over the three days, although he ended up signing a three-year contract with the Baltimore Ravens estimated to be worth between $885,000 (the rookie minimum) and $1,005,000 per year. Initially, Pavia received a minicamp invitation, but that turned into a contract. The payout represents a significant drop from Pavia's NIL deal with Vandy, which was estimated by Yahoo Sports to be nearly $2.5 million in 2025.

Pavia threw for 3,539 yards and 29 TDs last year against eight interceptions. He completed 70.6% of his passes and ran for 862 yards and 10 touchdowns. He lost out to Fernando Mendoza in the Heisman Trophy balloting and posted a petulant message on Instagram. He eventually apologized and will now get a chance to show that he belongs in the NFL.

DIEGO PAVIA



Diego Pavia
@diegopavia02

Being a part of the Heisman ceremony last night as a finalist was such an honor. As a competitor, just like in everything I do I wanted to win. To be so close to my dream and come up short was painful. I didn't handle those emotions well at all and did not represent myself the way I wanted to. I have much love and respect for the Heisman voters and the selection process, and I apologize for being disrespectful. It was a mistake, and I am sorry.

MR. IRRELEVANT – TIMES TWO

It's a good bet that Red Murdock didn't receive too much national attention while playing linebacker at the University of Buffalo, but he became famous during the late afternoon on the draft's last day when the Denver Broncos made him the 257th and last pick of the Draft, which gave him Mr. Irrelevant status.

One pick before choosing Murdock, the Broncos took Utah tight end Dallen Bentley at 256, which made them the first team in the common draft era (since 1967) to make the final two picks of the draft. Broncos head coach Sean Payton joked that Bentley would be "vice president" at the Irrelevant Week Festival in Southern California.

Murdock was a three-year standout for the Bulls. He had 156 tackles in 2024 and 142 in '25 and amassed 39.5 tackles for a loss during his career. He also set the FBS career mark with 17 forced fumbles.

Red Murdock (above) and Dallen Bentley

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ANGELINA ALCANTAR/NEWS SENTINEL; KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; JACOB MUSSELMAN-IMAGN IMAGES; TROY WAYRYNEN-IMAGN IMAGES

2027 NFL DRAFT PROSPECTS

I know we've barely finished handing out grades for this year's NFL Draft class, but it's never too early to look ahead at the top talent that will be available next April.

The 2027 NFL Draft class has already been labeled as one of the best in recent memory, thanks to some elite prospects who have already shown they can dominate at the highest level of college football. While this year's quarterback class was lackluster at best, the 2027 crop of passers has a chance to be special — if a handful of high-upside prospects can live up to the expectations they're carrying into the 2026 season.

There are big-play pass-catchers, explosive edge rushers, an elite shutdown corner and some exciting running backs in the 2027 group, as well as a long list of trench players on both sides of the ball with first-round talent and potential.

Here's my early look at the top prospects who will be eligible for the 2027 NFL Draft.

BY LUKE EASTERLING
ATHLON SPORTS DRAFT EXPERT

1 JEREMIAH SMITH

WR | OHIO STATE

Smith has been locked into this spot from the moment he stepped on the field for the Buckeyes as a true freshman. He's been NFL-ready his entire career in Columbus, and when he finally makes the jump, he'll have all the physical tools and experience needed to make a massive impact at the next level right away.

2. LEONARD MOORE CB | NOTRE DAME

As I studied some of this year's top wide receiver prospects, Moore was consistently jumping off the tape as the best player on the field. The definition of a shutdown corner, Moore checks every box at the position, and he heads into the 2026 college football season as one of the most dominant players in the country.

3. COLIN SIMMONS EDGE | TEXAS

If you're looking for a premium edge rusher at the top of the board next year, Simmons makes a strong case to be the best of the bunch. He's already racked up 21 sacks and 29.5 tackles for a loss over his first two collegiate seasons, and he is primed for another dominant campaign in 2026.

LEONARD MOORE

COLIN SIMMONS

FROM LEFT: ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH; MICHAEL CATERINA-IMAGN IMAGES; JEROME MIRON-IMAGN IMAGES

DYLAN STEWART

ARCH MANNING

4. DYLAN STEWART EDGE | SOUTH CAROLINA

Much like Simmons, Stewart has been flashing his first-round talent from Day 1. His rare combination of explosiveness and bend around the edge has made for some ridiculous highlights, and there's rare upside for a big-play defender who has tallied 22.5 tackles for a loss over the past two seasons.

5. ARCH MANNING QB | TEXAS

After choosing to return to school, Manning should benefit from another season of experience against top competition before jumping to the pros. There's never been any doubt about his physical traits, and if he lives up to the unreal expectations that come along with his name, he could be the slam-dunk No. 1 overall pick in 2027.

6. DANTE MOORE QB | OREGON

Moore could have gone as high as No. 2 overall in this year's NFL Draft, but he instead opted for another year of experience with the Ducks before making the leap. He'll be highly motivated to get his team a national title this time around, but he's already got all the physical and mental tools to be a franchise passer at the next level.

7. CAM COLEMAN WR | TEXAS

The physical traits are obvious with Coleman, but his production suffered from inconsistent quarterback play at Auburn. Now that he'll have Arch Manning throwing him the ball, Coleman shouldn't have any problems putting up big numbers while showing off the talent that could make him a high-end WR1 at the next level.

8. JORDAN SEATON OT | LSU

One of Deion Sanders' most prized recruits at Colorado, Seaton transferred to LSU, where he'll try to deliver on the high expectations of that 5-star rating. His tape has been inconsistent up to this point, but if he can fine-tune his technique and improve his level of play on a snap-by-snap basis, he could develop into a franchise left tackle prospect.

9. TREVOR GOOSBY OT | TEXAS

Goosby could have been a fairly early pick in this year's draft as a high-upside project thanks to his rare combination of size, power and athleticism, but he made the wise choice to come back for another year with the Longhorns. With more experience and additional polish on his technique, Goosby could be a dominant blocker and a top-10 pick.

10. JULIAN SAYIN QB | OHIO STATE

I'm not sure who will be the third-best quarterback in this class, but Sayin has as good a chance as any of the remaining prospects to take that title. He lacks ideal size, but he's an accurate passer with a strong enough arm who makes sound decisions with the football, and he has already proven that big games aren't too much for him.

BEST OF THE REST

11. **A'Mauri Washington** | DL | Oregon
12. **KJ Bolden** | S | Georgia
13. **David Stone** | DL | Oklahoma
14. **Ellis Robinson IV** | CB | Georgia
15. **Zabien Brown** | CB | Alabama
16. **Ahmad Hardy** | RB | Missouri
17. **LaNorris Sellers** | QB | South Carolina
18. **CJ Carr** | QB | Notre Dame
19. **Ryan Coleman-Williams** | WR | Alabama
20. **Jamari Johnson** | TE | Oregon
21. **Kyngstonn Viliamu-Asa** | LB | Notre Dame
22. **Trey'Dez Green** | TE | LSU
23. **Quincy Rhodes Jr.** | Edge | Arkansas
24. **Kewan Lacy** | RB | Ole Miss
25. **Matayo Uiagalelei** | Edge | Oregon
26. **Kelley Jones** | CB | Mississippi State
27. **Ahmad Moten Sr.** | DL | Miami (Fla.)
28. **Austin Siereveld** | OT | Ohio State
29. **Damon Wilson II** | Edge | Missouri
30. **Cayden Green** | OL | Missouri
31. **Anthony Smith** | DL | Minnesota
32. **Chris Peal** | CB | Syracuse
33. **Koi Perich** | S | Oregon
34. **Nick Marsh** | WR | Indiana
35. **Trinidad Chambliss** | QB | Ole Miss
36. **Darian Mensah** | QB | Miami (Fla.)
37. **Will Heldt** | Edge | Clemson
38. **Nate Frazier** | RB | Georgia
39. **Jayden Maiava** | QB | USC
40. **Mario Craver** | WR | Texas A&M
41. **Rasheem Biles** | LB | Texas
42. **OJ Frederique Jr.** | CB | Miami (Fla.)
43. **Brice Pollock** | CB | Texas Tech
44. **Will Echoles** | DL | Ole Miss
45. **Ty Benefield** | S | LSU
46. **Kenyatta Jackson Jr.** | Edge | Ohio State
47. **Jordan Ross** | DL | LSU
48. **Mateen Ibirogba** | DL | Texas Tech
49. **A.J. Holmes Jr.** | DL | Texas Tech
50. **Omarion Miller** | WR | Arizona State

FROM LEFT: JEFF BLAKE-IMAGN IMAGES; DALE ZANINE-IMAGN IMAGES

2027 NFL MOCK DRAFT

1ST ROUND

Here's an early look at how the first round of the 2027 NFL Draft could turn out, using the latest Super Bowl LXI odds to determine the pick order:

1 Miami Dolphins

ARCH MANNING QB | TEXAS

Malik Willis gives the Dolphins a solid starting option in the short term, but if the Dolphins end up with the top pick, his presence likely wouldn't prevent them from making Manning their franchise quarterback of the future.

2 New York Jets

DANTE MOORE QB | OREGON

Moore could've been the Jets' pick at No. 2 this year, and if they land in that same spot again in 2027, it won't be surprising if he ends up in Florham Park after all. Moore is a poised, polished passer who is surgical from the pocket.

3 Arizona Cardinals

JEREMIAH SMITH WR | OHIO STATE

We could very well end up with a worthy QB3 for this spot, but someone will have to emerge with a high level of consistency to warrant a team like the Cards passing up a generational receiver prospect in Smith.

4 Cleveland Browns

COLIN SIMMONS EDGE | TEXAS

It's possible the Browns could take another quarterback here, but it would make more sense to add another explosive edge rusher to line up opposite Myles Garrett.

5 Tennessee Titans

LEONARD MOORE CB | NOTRE DAME

The Titans will still be in "gather as much elite talent as humanly possible" mode next offseason, and Moore is an elite corner who was dominant last season.

6 Las Vegas Raiders

JORDAN SEATON OT | LSU

Protecting their investment in 2026 No. 1 overall pick Fernando Mendoza will remain the Raiders' top priority in the coming years, and that should always start in the trenches.

7 New Orleans Saints

DYLAN STEWART EDGE | SOUTH CAROLINA

Stewart is an absolute menace off the edge and could end up being a steal if he doesn't go in the top five.

8 Pittsburgh Steelers

JULIAN SAYIN QB | OHIO STATE

The Steelers just spent a third-round pick on Drew Allar, but that won't prevent them from spending next year's top selection on another quarterback if one like Sayin proves worthy of top-10 consideration.

9 Carolina Panthers

CAM COLEMAN WR | TEXAS

More help for quarterback Bryce Young is never a bad thing, and Coleman brings an exciting blend of size and athleticism to the receiver position.

10 Atlanta Falcons

TREVOR GOOSBY OT | TEXAS

The Falcons could be on the lookout for their next franchise left tackle in 2027. Goosby still needs a ton of refinement in terms of technique, but the physical traits are off the charts.

11 New York Giants

A'MAURI WASHINGTON DL | OREGON

Washington is a dominant run-stuffer with impressive pass-rushing upside for his size, and he could be the perfect fit for the Giants.

12 Minnesota Vikings

AHMAD HARDY RB | MISSOURI

The Vikings could look for Aaron Jones Sr.'s successor next offseason. Hardy is a dynamic, explosive back who can take any touch to the house.

13 Tampa Bay Buccaneers

DAVID STONE DL | OKLAHOMA

The Bucs have reloaded their defensive front this offseason, but don't be surprised if they keep it going next year. Stone is a dominant run defender who could unlock another level to his game.

14 Washington Commanders

ELLIS ROBINSON IV CB | GEORGIA

The Commanders failed to fill their massive need at cornerback in the 2026 draft. Robinson is a high-upside prospect who has all the traits to develop into a shutdown player at the next level.

15 New York Jets (from IND)

ZABIEN BROWN CB | ALABAMA

The Jets got this pick by trading away Sauce Gardner, and they could use it to help replace his impact at the corner position. Brown is a big-play defender with impressive athleticism and ball skills.

16 Jacksonville Jaguars

KJ BOLDEN S | GEORGIA

This roster doesn't have too many glaring needs, which could enable the Jags to make somewhat of a luxury pick at safety next year. Bolden is a versatile defender who can make big plays all over the field.

VISIT ATHLON SPORTS' NFL DRAFT EXPERT

LUKE EASTERLING

FOR DAILY UPDATES AND INFORMATION.

17 **Cincinnati Bengals**

KYNGSTONN VILIAMU-ASA LB | NOTRE DAME

A linebacker upgrade remains at the top of the Bengals' wish list in 2027. Viliamu-Asa has the complete skill set to make a three-down impact.

18 **Chicago Bears**

QUINCY RHODES JR. EDGE | ARKANSAS

The Bears should attack their needs on the defensive front early next year, whether along the interior or out on the edge. Rhodes was a borderline first-round prospect this year before deciding to return to school.

19 **New York Jets (from DAL)**

KEWAN LACY RB | OLE MISS

Breece Hall has signed a three-year deal, but the Jets are still crafting their long-term backfield plan. Lacy is a dangerous offensive weapon who can make big plays as both a runner and a receiver.

20 **Houston Texans**

AUSTIN SIEREVELD OT | OHIO STATE

Houston would be wise to continue to load up on high-end upgrades for the offensive line to keep C.J. Stroud protected. Siereveld has ideal physical traits.

21 **Dallas Cowboys (from GB)**

RYAN COLEMAN-WILLIAMS WR | ALABAMA

It doesn't look like George Pickens will be staying in Dallas long-term, so the Cowboys will need to find a new WR2 opposite CeeDee Lamb. Coleman-Williams has first-round talent and potential.

22 **Denver Broncos**

AHMAD MOTEN SR. DL | MIAMI (FLA.)

The Broncos would benefit from early investments in the depth and future of their defensive front, and Moten would give them a fantastic building block along the interior.

23 **Philadelphia Eagles**

MATAYO UIAGALELEI EDGE | OREGON

Uiagalelei could have been a fairly early pick in this year's draft, but he'll be even more prepared to make a big impact at the next level after another year with the Ducks.

24 **Detroit Lions**

CAYDEN GREEN OL | MISSOURI

Green has a ton of upside with his physical traits and the versatility to slide inside to guard, where Detroit would have a more immediate need.

25 **San Francisco 49ers**

KELLEY JONES CB | MISSISSIPPI STATE

Jones has rare size for the position and could easily play his way into a much higher draft slot this season.

26 **Kansas City Chiefs**

TREY'DEZ GREEN TE | LSU

Travis Kelce will be year-to-year for the Chiefs at this point, and Green's combination of size and athleticism would make him an ideal replacement.

27 **New England Patriots**

ANTHONY SMITH DL | MINNESOTA

The Pats still need to load up on defensive tackles. Smith has the frame and versatility to line up at multiple spots along the defensive front, and his physical traits give him a ton of upside.

28 **Los Angeles Chargers**

WILL HELDT EDGE | CLEMSON

This will obviously depend on whether or not Tuli Tuipulotu gets a long-term contract extension; if not, the Chargers will need to spend a second-straight first-round pick on another impact edge defender.

29 **Baltimore Ravens**

DAMON WILSON II EDGE | MIAMI (FLA.)

Even after spending this year's second-rounder on Zion Young, the Ravens could still target another edge rusher at the top of next year's board.

30 **Seattle Seahawks**

CHRIS PEAL CB | SYRACUSE

The Seahawks love big, athletic corners with length and physicality, and Peal has those traits.

31 **Buffalo Bills**

NICK MARSH WR | INDIANA

Don't be surprised if the Bills keep chasing a No. 1 receiver with size to help out Josh Allen and the passing game.

32 **Los Angeles Rams**

KOI PERICH DB | OREGON

Modern NFL defenses benefit from versatile defensive backs who can line up all over the field and make big plays. That's exactly what Perich did at Oregon and, before that, Minnesota.

AFC PREDICTIONS

PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. BUFFALO BILLS
2. DENVER BRONCOS
3. HOUSTON TEXANS
4. CINCINNATI BENGALS
5. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
6. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
7. BALTIMORE RAVENS

WILD CARD WEEKEND

BRONCOS OVER RAVENS
TEXANS OVER CHARGERS
PATRIOTS OVER BENGALS

DIVISIONAL ROUND

BILLS OVER PATRIOTS
BRONCOS OVER TEXANS

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

BILLS OVER BRONCOS

SUPER BOWL LXI

BILLS OVER SEAHAWKS

AFC EAST

1 BUFFALO BILLS
2 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
3 NEW YORK JETS
4 MIAMI DOLPHINS

AFC NORTH

1 CINCINNATI BENGALS
2 BALTIMORE RAVENS
3 PITTSBURGH STEELERS
4 CLEVELAND BROWNS

AFC SOUTH

1 HOUSTON TEXANS
2 JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS
3 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
4 TENNESSEE TITANS

AFC WEST

1 DENVER BRONCOS
2 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
3 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
4 LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

AFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Buffalo Bills
2. Denver Broncos
3. New England Patriots
4. Houston Texans
5. Los Angeles Chargers
6. Cincinnati Bengals
7. Baltimore Ravens
8. Jacksonville Jaguars
9. Pittsburgh Steelers
10. Kansas City Chiefs
11. Indianapolis Colts
12. Cleveland Browns
13. Tennessee Titans
14. Las Vegas Raiders
15. New York Jets
16. Miami Dolphins

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year
JOSH ALLEN QB, BILLS

Defensive Player of the Year
WILL ANDERSON JR. EDGE, TEXANS

Comeback Player of the Year
NNAMDI MADUBUIKE DE, RAVENS

Offensive Rookie of the Year
CARNELL TATE WR, TITANS

Defensive Rookie of the Year
MANSOOR DELANE CB, CHIEFS

Coach of the Year
JOE BRADY BILLS

AFC COACHING CAROUSEL

HEAD COACHES

BUFFALO BILLS
New: Joe Brady
Old: Sean McDermott

CLEVELAND BROWNS
New: Todd Monken
Old: Kevin Stefanski

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS
New: Klint Kubiak
Old: Pete Carroll

MIAMI DOLPHINS
New: Jeff Hafley
Old: Mike McDaniel

TENNESSEE TITANS
New: Robert Saleh
Old: Mike McCoy (interim)

BALTIMORE RAVENS
New: Jesse Minter
Old: John Harbaugh

PITTSBURGH STEELERS
New: Mike McCarthy
Old: Mike Tomlin

COORDINATORS

BALTIMORE RAVENS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Declan Doyle
Old: Todd Monken
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Anthony Weaver
Old: Zachary Orr

BUFFALO BILLS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Pete Carmichael Jr.
Old: Joe Brady
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Jim Leonhard
Old: Bobby Babich

CLEVELAND BROWNS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Travis Switzer
Old: Tommy Rees
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Mike Rutenberg
Old: Jim Schwartz

DENVER BRONCOS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Davis Webb
Old: Joe Lombardi

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Eric Bieniemy
Old: Matt Nagy

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Andrew Janocko
Old: Greg Olson
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Rob Leonard
Old: Patrick Graham

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Mike McDaniel
Old: Greg Roman
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Chris O'Leary
Old: Jesse Minter

ERIC BIENIEMY

BOBBY SLOWIK

MIAMI DOLPHINS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Bobby Slowik
Old: Frank Smith
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Sean Duggan
Old: Anthony Weaver

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Zak Kuhr
Old: Terrell Williams

NEW YORK JETS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Frank Reich
Old: Tanner Engstrand
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Brian Duker
Old: Chris Harris

PITTSBURGH STEELERS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Brian Angelichio
Old: Arthur Smith
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Patrick Graham
Old: Teryl Austin

TENNESSEE TITANS
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Brian Daboll
Old: Nick Holz
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Gus Bradley
Old: Dennard Wilson

BRIAN DABOLL

MINTER: LEXI THOMPSON-IMAGN IMAGES; MCCARTY: CHARLES LECLAIRE-IMAGN IMAGES; BIENIEMY: JEROME MIRON-USA TODAY SPORTS; SLOWIK: HAL HABIB; DABOLL: DENNY SIMMONS / THE TENNESSEAN

BILLS

AFC EAST FORECAST
1

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT HOUSTON	1:00
SEPT. 17	**DETROIT**	**8:15**
SEPT. 27	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	**NEW ENGLAND**	**1:00**
OCT. 12	AT L.A. RAMS	8:15
OCT. 18	AT LAS VEGAS	4:25
OCT. 25	BYE	
NOV. 1	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
NOV. 9	AT MINNESOTA	8:15
NOV. 15	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
NOV. 22	**MIAMI**	**1:00**
NOV. 26	**KANSAS CITY**	**8:20**
DEC. 6	AT NEW ENGLAND	4:25
DEC. 13	AT GREEN BAY	8:20
DEC. 19	**CHICAGO**	**8:20**
DEC. 25	AT DENVER	4:30
JAN. 3	AT MIAMI	1:00
TBD	**N.Y. JETS**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	AFC PLAYOFFS	11
2022	AFC PLAYOFFS	13
2023	AFC PLAYOFFS	11
2024	AFC PLAYOFFS	13
2025	AFC PLAYOFFS	12

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **JOE BRADY**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **PETE CARMICHAEL**
Defensive Coordinator: **JIM LEONHARD**
Special Teams Coordinator: **JEFF RODGERS**
Quarterbacks: **BO HARDEGREE**
Running Backs: **KELLY SKIPPER**
Wide Receivers: **DREW TERRELL**
Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends: **ROB BORAS**
Offensive Line: **PAT MEYER**
Defensive Line: **TERRANCE JAMISON**
Outside Linebackers: **BOBBY APRILL III**
Inside Linebackers: **JOHN EGORUGWU**
Cornerbacks: **JAY VALAI**
Secondary: **JOE DANNA**

The sight of his superstar quarterback, Josh Allen, devastated in the visiting locker room in Denver in the moments after the Bills' devastating AFC divisional round playoff loss to the Broncos last January was an enlightening moment for team owner Terry Pegula.

"I looked around, and the first thing I noticed was our quarterback with his head down, crying," Pegula said. "I saw the pain in Josh's face at his presser, and I felt his pain. I know we can do better, and I know we will get better."

Thus, Pegula fired head coach Sean McDermott, the coach who rescued his sagging franchise, ended the embarrassing 17-year playoff drought in his first season in 2017 and proceeded to lead the Bills into the playoffs in eight of nine seasons, winning five AFC East titles and appearing in two AFC Championship Games. McDermott's Bills won more games from 2017-25 than every other NFL team except the Kansas City Chiefs.

But while the Chiefs won five AFC titles and three Super Bowls in that span, the Bills won zero and zero.

With Allen turning 30 in May, Pegula felt the time had come to try something different because, as he said, "I felt like we hit the proverbial playoff wall year after year."

Offensive coordinator Joe Brady was promoted to the big office, and new defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard was hired to make changes to a unit that has repeatedly let the Bills down in January.

It's a new era in Buffalo, and there's also a whole lot of pressure on Brady, the youngest head coach in the NFL at 36, as he steps into a situation where he's walking a tightrope with no safety net.

The Bills, the only team in the NFL to have qualified for the playoffs seven seasons running, remain in win-now mode, and Pegula has made it clear that just making it to the tournament isn't good enough. Nothing less than a Super Bowl championship, or at the very least, a Super Bowl appearance, is going to cut it with Allen in the prime of his career.

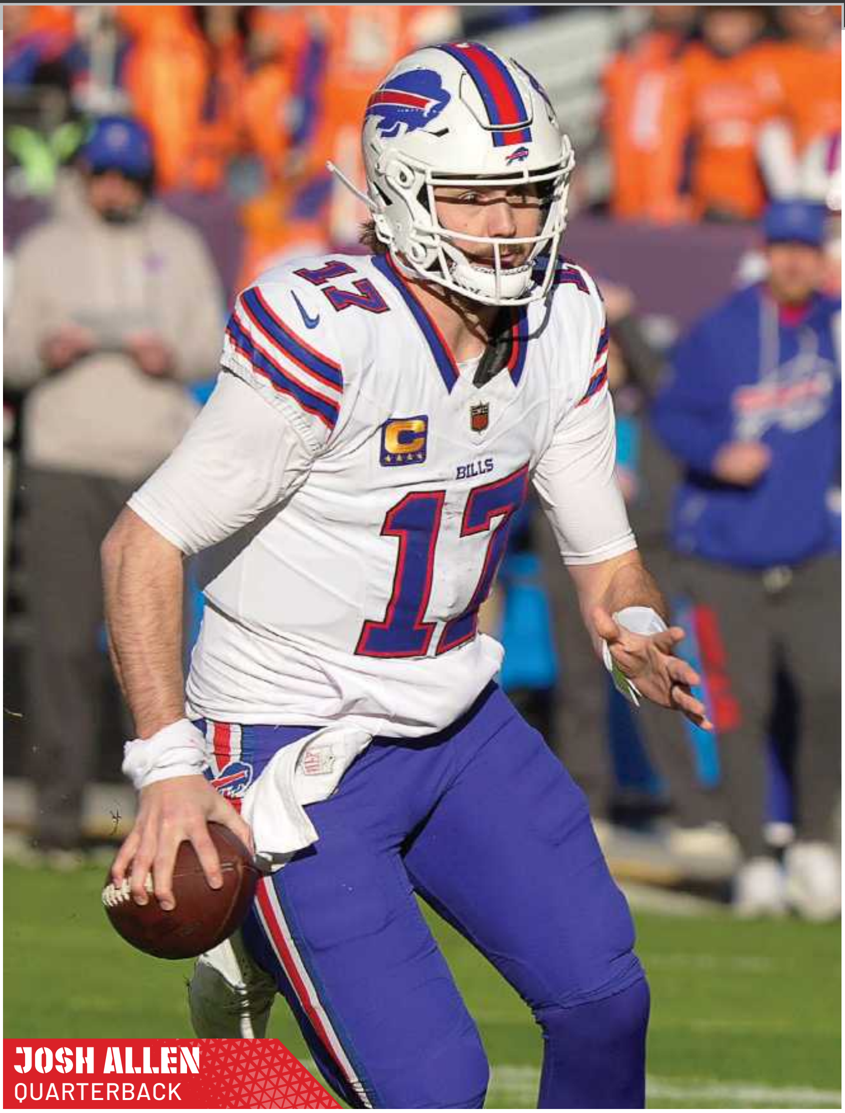
OFFENSE

Brady was the last man standing after nine head coach interviews, and one of the key reasons is that Pegula and president/general manager Brandon Beane wanted the offense to keep rolling as it had with Brady as coordinator.

The Bills tied for fourth in scoring, ranked fourth in total yards and led the NFL in rushing last season. James Cook III ran for an NFL-best 1,621 yards, and his 56.6% success rate was second only to Kyren Williams among backs who topped 1,000 yards. He produced 68 first downs and scored 12 TDs playing behind one of the best run-blocking offensive lines in the NFL. However, the Bills lost left guard David Edwards in free agency, and they don't have a great alternative in place on the roster.

Even though the Bills' wide receiver room was underwhelming for a second straight season, Allen improved his completion percentage from 63.6% to 69.3%. That was partially the result of his reliance on easy, quick passes because the WRs had so much trouble getting open in the intermediate areas. Allen also threw 10 picks and was sacked a career-high 40 times, the majority of those because he held the ball too long waiting for someone to get open.

To remedy their weakness at the receiver position, the Bills acquired DJ Moore in a trade with the Chicago Bears and drafted Skyler Bell in the fourth



JOSH ALLEN
QUARTERBACK

TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

round. There's optimism that Khalil Shakir can remain an effective slot weapon, that Joshua Palmer can stay healthy and deliver on his 2025 free-agent promise and that Keon Coleman can put two sloppy years behind him and play like a second-round pick. If all that happens, the offense should keep humming.

DEFENSE

After nine years in McDermott's 4-2-5 base nickel, Leonhard is implementing a 3-4. The transition does raise some concerns because so many of the Bills' returning players were drafted and developed to play in the old defense. Now, everyone in the front seven has to learn a slightly different position, and the question will be how quickly the Bills can get past the growing pains.

The biggest change comes on the edge, as both Greg Rousseau and Michael Hoecht convert from playing with a hand on the ground in a 4-3 to being standup outside linebackers with occasional coverage responsibilities. Bradley Chubb signed in free agency because that's the position he has played most of his career; likewise for TJ Parker from Clemson, the Bills' first pick in the draft. Buffalo's pass rush has often failed to finish, and Leonhard is hoping to change that by moving pieces around up front and utilizing stunts and blitzes.

On the line, Ed Oliver missed most of last season because of injury, but he is back and should excel moving out a little wider in the 4i/5-tech spot. Deone Walker is coming off a solid rookie season and will likely be utilized in the 4i/5-tech but also as a nose tackle in the A gap.

Christian Benford is one of the top cornerbacks in the league, but behind him it's thin. Maxwell Hairston, the team's 2025 first-round pick, couldn't stay healthy as a rookie, and the only depth behind them is 2026 second-round pick Davison Igbinosun, who may have been a reach in that spot. Signing veteran safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson was a solid move. He'll pair with Cole Bishop, who appears ready to take off in his third season.

SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Tyler Bass missed all of 2025, but the Bills feel that he has recovered in full and should pick up where he left off in 2024. Bass has a career field-goal accuracy of 84.5% and an extra-point success rate of 96%. Still, he has to prove he's healthy, and if something goes wrong, it's not crazy to think the Bills would release him over the summer, save $1.8 million on the cap and sign someone at a lower cost. Unlikely, but possible.

Mitch Wishnowsky joined the Bills last year in Week 5 and settled down a turbulent punting situation. The team re-signed him to a one-year deal, but they spent a seventh-round pick on Tommy Doman Jr., who will compete for the job. If Doman wins, he would also save the Bills some cap space.

Ray Davis emerged from nowhere as a kickoff returner and wound up earning All-Pro honors after leading the NFL with a 30.4-yard average, which included a 97-yard TD. Punt return has been a black hole in Buffalo for several years, and there's no clarity for 2026.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Bills are still legitimate Super Bowl contenders because they have Allen playing brilliantly, augmented by a dynamic running attack with Cook. The big questions all come on defense, as the new scheme will take time to implement while the returning players figure out their fits and learn their new roles. The AFC East is no longer Buffalo's private domain, as it was for five straight seasons, with the New England Patriots ready to defend their division title. But there's no reason why the Bills can't switch places with New England in 2026.

2025 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 7	BALTIMORE	W	41-40
Sept. 14	AT N.Y. JETS	W	30-10
Sept. 18	MIAMI	W	31-21
Sept. 28	NEW ORLEANS	W	31-19
Oct. 5	New England	L	20-23
Oct. 13	at Atlanta	L	14-24
Oct.26	AT CAROLINA	W	40-9
Nov.2	KANSAS CITY	W	28-21
Nov. 9	at Miami	L	13-30
Nov. 16	TAMPA BAY	W	44-32
Nov.20	at Houston	L	19-23
Nov. 30	AT PITTSBURGH	W	26-7
Dec.7	CINCINNATI	W	39-34
Dec. 14	AT NEW ENGLAND	W	35-31
Dec. 21	AT CLEVELAND	W	23-20
Dec. 28	Philadelphia	L	12-13
Jan.4	N.Y. JETS	W	35-8
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	AT JACKSONVILLE	W	27-24
Jan. 17	at Denver (ot)	L	30-33

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	376.3	4	2
RUSHING	159.6	1	1
PASSING	216.6	15	7
SCORING	28.3	T4	2
THIRD DOWN %	44.8	4	2
POINTS/PLAY	0.440	5	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	293.1	7	5
RUSHING	136.2	28	14
PASSING	156.9	1	1
SCORING	21.5	12	7
INTERCEPTIONS	13	T11	T6
SACKS	36	T21	11
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.394	21	12
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+1	T12	6

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JOSH ALLEN	460	319	3,668	25	10
MITCHELL TRUBISKY	35	25	313	4	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JAMES COOK III	309	1,621	5.2	12
JOSH ALLEN	112	579	5.2	14
RAY DAVIS	58	275	4.7	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
KHALIL SHAKIR	72	719	10.0	4
DALTON KINCAID	39	571	14.6	5
KEON COLEMAN	38	404	10.6	4
DAWSON KNOX	36	417	11.6	4
JAMES COOK III	33	291	8.8	2

KICKING: Matt Prater, 18-20 FGs, 46-49 PATs, 100 points; **TACKLES:** Cole Bishop, 85; Jordan Poyer, 70; **SACKS:** Greg Rousseau, 7.0; Joey Bosa, 5.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Cole Bishop, 3; 3 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GOOD BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH The Bills have made it to the divisional round of the playoffs in seven straight seasons, but they are now only the fourth team to have done that at least six years in a row without winning a Super Bowl. The others are the Minnesota Vikings (1973-78), Los Angeles Rams (1973-79), and Bills (1988-93). As if that heartbreak isn't enough, the Bills' 33-30 overtime loss to Denver in January made them the first team in NFL history to get knocked out of the playoffs three straight years by no more than a field goal.

TOO SOFT One of the reasons Sean McDermott was fired: In the six postseason elimination games between 2020-25, his defense allowed 33.2 points per game. Out of 12 teams with at least three playoff losses since 2020, Buffalo's points-per-game yield in those games is second-highest in the NFL. What's maddening is that since 2020, the Bills' 25.5 points per game on offense in their playoff losses is No. 1.

DOUG ENGLE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

SLOWER STARTS Between 2020-22, the Bills were one of the fastest-starting teams in the NFL, as they held 34 halftime leads compared to nine deficits, but that trend has faded. In the past three seasons, they've had 29 halftime leads and 23 deficits. To that end, Josh Allen had to engineer five fourth-quarter comeback wins in 2025, including a thrilling 35-31 road win over the New England Patriots on a **James Cook III** touchdown run.

HIGHMARK HIGHLIGHTS The Bills will begin play in their new stadium this season, across the street from Highmark Stadium, the venue that had served as their home since 1973. Counting playoff games, the Bills finished with a record of 266-172 in the place that was originally named Rich Stadium. Most of that winning came in two eras — when Jim Kelly was the QB, and then with Allen. In Kelly's 11 seasons, the Bills were 74-24, and with Allen they were 57-19. Put that together and it's a .750 winning percentage. As for most of the other years, yeah, not too pretty.

SCOUTING THE BILLS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BUFFALO

"Brandon Beane won the power struggle over Sean McDermott and now has all the juice he could want as a general manager. As much as McDermott built a standard of toughness and competency, they've hit a wall in the playoffs. Sometimes, you gotta change things up. Joe Brady relates well to players and has a close relationship with Josh Allen. That will help give him credibility in the locker room. While I believe he's respected, I don't think he's feared. This is a major change-up in terms of personalities from an old-school coach in McDermott to a younger energy from Brady. … James Cook III is a pure, natural runner and is a constant home-run threat. … DJ Moore provides an upgrade to the receiving corps, but I still think they lack a true No. 1 target. Keon Coleman has to finally grow up. … It's imperative that Allen be healthy in the playoffs. If that means running less and throwing the football away more frequently, so be it. … This offensive line is tough, especially Dion Dawkins. Re-signing Connor McGovern was smart. .... I like their tight end combo of Dawson Knox and Dalton Kincaid. … This is an underrated front seven, especially after adding Bradley Chubb. If he's healthy, they've got a strong pass rush with him and Greg Rousseau and Ed Oliver inside. … Terrel Bernard makes a lot of heady plays. … No one has been able to deal with C.J. Gardner-Johnson on an extended basis for the past few years, but the guy can play. Big hitter with a nose for the football. … The secondary lacks star power, but they're really solid overall."

2026 BILLS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17	Allen, Josh	QB	6-5	237	8	Wyoming	D1a-18	D1a-Buf-18
11	Allen, Kyle	QB	6-3	210	8	Houston	FA-Det-26	FA-Car-18
6	Buechele, Shane	QB	6-0	210	2	SMU	FA-26	FA-KC-21

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Cook III, James	RB	5-11	190	4	Georgia	D2-22	D2-Buf-22
7	Davis, Ray	RB	5-8	211	2	Kentucky	D4-24	D4-Buf-24
20	Gore Jr., Frank	RB	5-8	201	1	Southern Miss	FA-24	FA-Buf-24
26	Johnson, Ty	RB	5-10	210	6	Maryland	FA-23	D6-Det-19
	VanSumeren, Ben	FB	6-2	231	3	Michigan State	FA-Phi-26	FA-Phi-23

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0	Coleman, Keon	WR	6-3	213	2	Florida State	D2-24	D2-Buf-24
89	Gosnell, Stephen	WR	6-1	198	1	Virginia Tech	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
1	Hardman Jr., Mecole	WR	5-10	187	7	Georgia	FA-25	D2-KC-19
85	Hawes, Jackson	TE	6-4	253	1	Georgia Tech	D5b-25	D5b-Buf-25
86	Kincaid, Dalton	TE	6-3	246	3	Utah	D1-23	D1-Buf-23
88	Knox, Dawson	TE	6-4	254	7	Ole Miss	D3b-19	D3b-Buf-19
83	Latu, Keleki	TE	6-6	249	1	Washington	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
2	Moore, DJ	WR	6-0	213	8	Maryland	T-Chi-26	D1-Car-18
5	Palmer, Joshua	WR	6-1	210	5	Tennessee	FA-LAC-25	D3a-LAC-21
10	Shakir, Khalil	WR	6-0	190	4	Boise State	D5-22	D5-Buf-22
14	Shavers, Tyrell	WR	6-4	211	1	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-Buf-23
81	Sherfield Sr., Trent	WR	6-1	206	8	Vanderbilt	FA-26	FA-Ari-18
87	Virgil, Jalen	WR	6-1	210	3	Appalachian State	FA-26	FA-Den-22
48	Zylstra, Shane	TE	6-4	244	5	Minnesota State	FA-26	FA-Min-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70	Anderson, Alec	OL	6-5	305	3	UCLA	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
65	Broeker, Nick	G	6-4	305	2	Ole Miss	FA-26	D7-Buf-23
79	Brown, Spencer	T	6-8	311	5	Northern Iowa	D3-21	D3-Buf-21
67	Clayton, Travis	T	6-7	303	2	Basingstoke (UK)	D7-24	D7-Buf-24
63	Corbett, Austin	C	6-4	305	8	Nevada	FA-Car-26	D2a-Cle-18
53	Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	6-4	315	6	LSU	FA-Ten-26	D3b-Den-20
73	Dawkins, Dion	T	6-5	320	9	Temple	D2b-17	D2b-Buf-17
68	Grable, Tylan	T	6-5	313	2	UCF	D6-24	D6-Buf-24
77	Lundt, Chase	T	6-7	304	1	UConn	D6b-25	D6b-Buf-25
66	McGovern, Connor	C	6-6	318	7	Penn State	FA-Dal-23	D3-Dal-19
64	Torrence, O'Cyrus	G	6-5	330	3	Florida	D2-23	D2-Buf-23
62	Van Pran-Granger, S.	C/G	6-4	315	2	Georgia	D5-24	D5-Buf-24

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71	Akingbesote, Tommy	DT	6-4	316	1	Maryland	FA-25	D7-Dal-25
90	Carter, DeWayne	DT	6-2	302	2	Duke	D3-24	D3-Buf-24
51	Danna, Mike	DE	6-2	257	6	Central Michigan	FA-26	D5-KC-20
94	Jackson, Landon	DE	6-6	264	1	Arkansas	D3-25	D3-Buf-25
93	Logue, Zion	DT	6-6	325	1	Georgia	PS-Atl-24	D6-Atl-24
72	Mathis, Phidarian	DT	6-4	312	4	Alabama	FA-25	D2-Was-22
91	Oliver, Ed	DT	6-1	287	7	Houston	D1-19	D1-Buf-19
98	Sanders, T.J.	DT	6-4	297	1	South Carolina	D2-25	D2-Buf-25
56	Solomon, Javon	DE	6-1	246	2	Troy	D5-24	D5-Buf-24
96	Walker, Deone	DT	6-7	331	1	Kentucky	D4-25	D4-Buf-25

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Andreessen, Joe	LB	6-0	240	2	Buffalo	FA-24	FA-Buf-24
8	Bernard, Terrel	LB	6-1	224	4	Baylor	D3-22	D3-Buf-22
9	Chubb, Bradley	OLB	6-4	268	8	NC State	FA-Mia-26	D1-Den-18
35	Ciarlo, Jimmy	LB	6-2	225	2	Army	FA-26	FA-NYJ-24
55	Hoecht, Michael	OLB	6-4	267	5	Brown	FA-LAR-25	FA-LAR-20
49	Jenkins, Keonta	LB	6-2	211	1	Virginia Tech	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
75	Jones Jr., Andre	OLB	6-5	258	2	Louisiana	FA-25	D7-Was-23
15	Rousseau, Greg	OLB	6-6	266	5	Miami (Fla.)	D1-21	D1-Buf-21
54	Spector, Baylon	LB	6-0	233	4	Clemson	D7-22	D7-Buf-22
42	Williams, Dorian	LB	6-1	228	3	Tulane	D3-23	D3-Buf-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Alford, Dee	CB	5-11	180	4	Tusculum	FA-Atl-26	FA-Atl-22
47	Benford, Christian	CB	6-1	205	4	Villanova	D6b-22	D6b-Buf-22
24	Bishop, Cole	S	6-2	206	2	Utah	D2-24	D2-Buf-24
33	Couch, Te'Cory	DB	5-10	185	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-24	FA-Buf-24
38	Devonshire, M.J.	CB	5-11	186	1	Pitt	FA-25	D7-LV-24
28	Franklin Jr., Sam	S	6-3	210	6	Temple	FA-25	FA-Car-20
22	Gardner-Johnson, C.J.	S	5-11	208	7	Florida	FA-Chi-26	D4-NO-19
31	Hairston, Maxwell	CB	5-11	192	1	Kentucky	D1-25	D1-Buf-25
3	Hamlin, Damar	S	6-0	200	5	Pittsburgh	D6b-21	D6b-Buf-21
37	Hancock, Jordan	DB	6-0	195	1	Ohio State	D5a-25	D5a-Buf-25
30	Owens, Wande	S	5-11	205	1	New Hampshire	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
46	Porter Jr., Daryl	CB	5-11	184	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
25	Stone, Geno	S	5-11	210	6	Iowa	FA-Cin-26	D7-Bal-20
43	Strong, Dorian	CB	6-1	185	1	Virginia Tech	D6a-25	D6a-Buf-25

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Bass, Tyler	K	5-10	183	6	Georgia Southern	D6-20	D6-Buf-20
69	Ferguson, Reid	LS	6-2	235	9	LSU	FA-16	FA-Buf-16
19	Wishnowsky, Mitch	P	6-2	220	7	Utah	FA-25	D4-SF-19

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Joshua Palmer	0	Keon Coleman
WR	2	DJ Moore	13	Skyler Bell (R)
WR	10	Khalil Shakir	81	Trent Sherfield Sr.
LT	73	Dion Dawkins	68	Tylan Grable
LG	63	Austin Corbett	70	Alec Anderson
C	66	Connor McGovern	53	Lloyd Cushenberry III
RG	64	O'Cyrus Torrence	74	Jude Bowry (R)
RT	79	Spencer Brown	77	Chase Lundt
TE	86	Dalton Kincaid	88	Dawson Knox
QB	17	Josh Allen	11	Kyle Allen
RB	4	James Cook III	7	Ray Davis

DEFENSE

DE	98	T.J. Sanders	94	Landon Jackson
NT	96	Deone Walker	90	DeWayne Carter
DT	91	Ed Oliver	92	Zane Durant (R)
OLB	15	Greg Rousseau	55	Michael Hoecht
ILB	8	Terrel Bernard	44	Joe Andreessen
ILB	42	Dorian Williams	52	Kaleb Elarms-Orr (R)
OLB	9	Bradley Chubb	99	TJ Parker (R)
CB	31	Maxwell Hairston	43	Dorian Strong
CB	47	Christian Benford	21	Davison Igbinosun (R)
NB	23	Dee Alford	29	Jalon Kilgore (R)
S	22	C.J. Gardner-Johnson	25	Geno Stone
S	24	Cole Bishop	37	Jordan Hancock

SPECIALISTS

K	16	Tyler Bass	KR	7	Ray Davis
P	19	Mitch Wishnowsky	PR	1	Mecole Hardman Jr.

-40

The Bills were the only NFL defense last year to allow negative yards after catch over expected at -40.

DRAFT CLASS GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	TJ Parker	OLB	6-3	263	Clemson
2	Davison Igbinosun	CB	6-2	193	Ohio State
4	Jude Bowry	OT/G	6-5	314	Boston College
4	Skyler Bell	WR	5-11	192	UConn
4	Kaleb Elarms-Orr	ILB	6-2	234	TCU
5	Jalon Kilgore	S	6-1	210	South Carolina
5	Zane Durant	DT	6-1	290	Penn State
7	Toriano Pride Jr.	CB	5-10	185	Missouri
7	Tommy Doman Jr.	P	6-4	214	Florida
7	Ar'maj Reed-Adams	G	6-5	314	Texas A&M

The Bills had clear needs at edge rusher, cornerback and inside linebacker, and president/general manager Brandon Beane made sure he checked all of those boxes. He started with just seven picks and only two in the first 125, but he pulled off seven trades, wound up with three extra picks and improved his position in several rounds. That included trading down three times to get out of the first round because the value was not there at edge rusher, which is what he wanted to attack first. TJ Parker was a solid choice at No. 35 overall, and he should become an immediate contributor. Davison Igbinosun will have a chance to compete with 2025 first-round pick Maxwell Hairston for a starting cornerback job.

DOLPHINS

AFC EAST FORECAST

4

The Miami Dolphins might as well start calling themselves "Green Bay South."

A complete franchise makeover took place in 2026. The Dolphins brought in people associated with the Green Bay Packers, and now we'll start to see if their long-term vision can replicate the consistent success and contention seen in Green Bay.

Longtime general manager Chris Grier was let go during his 10th season and replaced with Jon-Eric Sullivan, who has been with the Packers for more than two decades.

Then came the coaching search after Mike McDaniel's firing. And Sullivan got his guy from Green Bay, Jeff Hafley, who was the defensive coordinator there the past two years.

The new regime wasn't going to keep Tua Tagovailoa's contract on the books, so when Miami released him, the new answer at quarterback, Malik Willis, came from — you guessed it — the Packers.

It's not only about having the GM, coach and quarterback. The Dolphins want to pivot from the big free-agent contracts they were dishing out in recent offseasons for a build-through-the-draft approach. On the field, they want to establish physicality and toughness as core principles, veering from the speed and finesse of the McDaniel-led squads.

OFFENSE

A team can still have electric speed while playing with physicality. It'll be difficult to find a faster quarterback-running back tandem in the NFL than Willis and De'Von Achane. It's unknown what exactly Bobby Slowik has in mind as he takes over as offensive coordinator, but Willis and Achane could form a fierce read-option tandem. Slowik comes from the same Shanahan coaching tree as McDaniel and Hafley, and one directive from Hafley is that he wants an offense that will establish the run. Achane will thrive off that, building on his 1,350-rushing-yard season and Pro Bowl appearance in 2025, especially when Miami runs outside-zone concepts to get him out into space. Jaylen Wright and Ollie Gordon II can spell Achane to run between the tackles and punch the ball forward in short-yardage situations.

Willis, after two years in which he couldn't cut it with the Tennessee Titans and two more spent learning behind Packers quarterback Jordan Love, gets his shot. His athleticism and elusiveness, combined with a big arm that can deliver the deep ball, give him a chance to succeed. Sullivan has seen his development over two seasons in Green Bay, and Hafley has referenced the tough looks Willis gave his defense on the scout team there.

Willis will have a limited receiving corps after the Dolphins released Tyreek Hill and traded Jaylen Waddle. Tutu Atwell is small and speedy. Jalen Tolbert joins him as a 6-foot-1 target who can stretch the field and hopes to regain the form he showed in 2024 with the Dallas Cowboys. Malik Washington can work underneath routes out of the slot, and a trio of rookie draft picks — bigger-bodied third-rounders Caleb Douglas and Chris Bell and shifty slot receiver Kevin Coleman Jr. — should see opportunities.

Tight end Greg Dulcich experienced a late-season surge as a pass-catcher in the middle last year and can build off that in 2025. Miami selected a bulldozer of an in-line blocking tight end in Will Kacmarek in the third round.

The offensive line has two pillars in left tackle Patrick Paul and center Aaron

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT LAS VEGAS	4:25
SEPT. 20	AT SAN FRANCISCO	4:25
SEPT. 27	**KANSAS CITY**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	AT MINNESOTA	4:05
OCT. 11	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	BYE	
OCT. 25	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
NOV. 1	**NEW ENGLAND**	**4:25**
NOV. 8	**DETROIT**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
NOV. 22	AT BUFFALO	1:00
NOV. 29	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	AT DENVER	4:05
DEC. 13	**CHICAGO**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	AT GREEN BAY	1:00
DEC. 27	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**1:00**
JAN. 3	**BUFFALO**	**1:00**
TBD	AT NEW ENGLAND	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021		9
2022	AFC PLAYOFFS	9
2023	AFC PLAYOFFS	11
2024		8
2025		7

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **JEFF HAFLEY**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **BOBBY SLOWIK**
Defensive Coordinator: **SEAN DUGGAN**
Special Teams Coordinator: **CHRIS TABOR**
Quarterbacks: **BUSH HAMDAN**
Running Backs: **LADELL BETTS**
Wide Receivers: **TYKE TOLBERT**
Tight Ends: **RON MIDDLETON**
Offensive Line: **ZACH YENSER**
Passing Game Coordinator: **KEVIN PATULLO**
Defensive Line: **AUSTIN CLARK**
Linebackers: **AL WASHINGTON**
Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks: **JAHMILE ADDAE**
Defensive Backs/Passing Game Coordinator: **RYAN DOWNARD**
Run Game Coordinator/Senior Defensive Assistant: **JOE BARRY**

DE'VON ACHANE
RUNNING BACK

TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI-IMAGN IMAGES

Brewer, and Sullivan looked to add another with the infusion of the rare size (6-foot-7, 352) and speed of Kadyn Proctor, the first-round tackle out of Alabama who may start off as a tall guard.

Miami needs a better second season out of 2025 second-round pick Jonah Savaiinaea, and a switch back to the right side, where he played in college, could help. Right tackle Austin Jackson needs to prove he can stay healthy after coming back on a restructured deal.

DEFENSE

Hafley will want to base his unit out of more four-man fronts, a rarity for recent Dolphins defenses under Anthony Weaver, Vic Fangio, Josh Boyer and Brian Flores. Hafley will call defensive plays and brings with him a trusted assistant from Green Bay, Boston College and Ohio State, Sean Duggan, as his defensive coordinator.

The Dolphins are strongest in the middle, where All-Pro Jordyn Brooks, last year's tackles leader in the NFL, ferociously cleans up everything from the Will linebacker position. The Dolphins bring back Brooks and Tyrel Dodson, last season's starters, but drafting Texas Tech linebacker Jacob Rodriguez brings intrigue to that dynamic, as Rodriguez is viewed as a future leader and green-dot helmet communicator from the Mike spot. That was Dodson's job, and there are questions over whether all three could play together or if Dodson's role will be diminished.

Hafley and Duggan also inherit a solid group of defensive tackles, though Zach Sieler might be losing a step on his pass rush after back-to-back 10-sack seasons in 2023 and '24. Around him is a trio of second-year defensive tackles in Kenneth Grant, who needs his size-athleticism combination to flourish as a first-round pick; Jordan Phillips, who earned a starting role last year; and Zeek Biggers.

Chop Robinson, a 2024 first-round selection, must continue to affect the quarterback while improving at setting the edge against the run. He will put his hand on the ground after previously standing up almost exclusively. There's a big opportunity for Josh Uche to reclaim his effectiveness from 2022, when he had 11.5 sacks as a New England Patriot.

Hafley has a background in coaching defensive backs, and he'll need to develop a unit that has a lot of uncertainty. The Dolphins drafted cornerback Chris Johnson in the first round, and they like his coverage at all three levels while playing either on the boundary or as a nickel. Darrell Baker Jr. got starting experience in Tennessee, but he had a 124.1 passer rating against in 2025. He'll vie for a spot with the likes of second-year cornerback Jason Marshall Jr., as well as Storm Duck and JuJu Brents, who are coming off injuries last season. Veterans Alex Austin and Marco Wilson will also compete for a roster spot.

Safety Dante Trader Jr. is cerebral for a second-year player, but Zayne Anderson is a special-teamer who has played defensively under Hafley in Green Bay. Meanwhile, the Dolphins drafted safety Michael Taaffe, who went from undersized walk-on to All-American at Texas, and veteran Lonnie Johnson Jr. is also in the mix.

SPECIALISTS

When Sullivan says he wants competition at every position, he's not kidding. Riley Patterson, who made 27-of-29 field goals last year, has to beat out Zane Gonzalez, who has been with new special teams coordinator Chris Tabor at two previous stops. Bradley Pinion and Seth Vernon will duke it out for the punter job. Tucker Addington and Taybor Pepper are the options to gain the long-snapping role. As a returner, Washington would be the incumbent favorite, but the rookie Coleman will push him.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The 2026 Dolphins embark on a rebuild. This team won't be judged on wins and losses but on establishing the right culture for the future while preparing to be more competitive in free agency in 2027 (once the nearly $182 million dead cap hit is in the rear-view mirror) and stacking another draft class with the current group.

2025 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 7	at Indianapolis	L	8-33
Sept. 14	New England	L	27-33
Sept. 18	at Buffalo	L	21-31
Sept. 29	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**27-21**
Oct. 5	at Carolina	L	24-27
Oct. 12	L.A. Chargers	L	27-29
Oct. 19	at Cleveland	L	6-31
Oct. 26	**AT ATLANTA**	**W**	**34-10**
Oct. 30	Baltimore	L	6-28
Nov. 9	**BUFFALO**	**W**	**30-13**
Nov. 16	**WASHINGTON (OT)**	**W**	**16-13**
Nov. 30	**NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**21-17**
Dec. 7	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**34-10**
Dec. 15	at Pittsburgh	L	15-28
Dec. 21	Cincinnati	L	21-45
Dec. 28	**TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**20-17**
Jan. 4	at New England	L	10-38

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	300.7	26	12
RUSHING	120.2	13	6
PASSING	180.5	25	11
SCORING	20.4	25	12
THIRD DOWN %	34.9	27	13
POINTS/PLAY	0.366	17	9

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	348.8	22	11
RUSHING	132.4	26	13
PASSING	216.4	18	10
SCORING	24.9	24	13
INTERCEPTIONS	9	T23	13
SACKS	39	T15	T7
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.414	25	13
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-4	T23	12

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
TUA TAGOVAILOA	384	260	2,660	20	15
QUINN EWERS	83	55	622	3	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
DE'VON ACHANE	238	1,350	5.7	8
JAYLEN WRIGHT	70	288	4.1	2
OLLIE GORDON	70	199	2.8	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DE'VON ACHANE	67	488	7.3	4
JAYLEN WADDLE	64	910	14.2	6
MALIK WASHINGTON	46	317	6.9	3
GREG DULCICH	26	335	12.9	1
DARREN WALLER	24	283	11.8	6

KICKING: Riley Patterson, 27-29 FGs, 34-35 PATs, 115 points; **TACKLES:** Jordyn Brooks, 183; Tyrel Dodson, 129; **SACKS:** Bradley Chubb, 8.5; Zach Sieler, 5.5 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Rasul Douglas, 2; 7 players tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

AIKMAN INVOLVEMENT When general manager Jon-Eric Sullivan and head coach **Jeff Hafley** held their introductory press conference, a pair of Hall of Fame quarterbacks — the Dallas Cowboys' Troy Aikman and the Dolphins' Dan Marino — sat side by side, representing a combined 640 regular and postseason touchdowns across two seats. Aikman and the Dolphins linked up for the GM search, as Miami wanted his input from around the league. The Dallas legend was then involved in head coach interviews that landed Hafley.

SAM NAVARRO-IMAGN IMAGES

HAF A DAY The day Hafley got the job, the College Football Playoff national championship game was at Hard Rock Stadium across the street from team facilities. As he interviewed late that afternoon, he had an airplane waiting to take him to his next interview. The Dolphins brass asked to speak in private for what Hafley said was 45 minutes. When they came back, they offered him the job. Later that night, he was sitting next to owner Stephen Ross in a suite watching the college title game.

FROM ACROSS THE POND Dolphins fifth-round pick Seydou Traore, a Mississippi State tight end, hails from London. He moved to Clearwater, Florida, as a high school senior in search of a football scholarship. That got him to Arkansas State and then to the SEC before getting drafted, with the UK flag draped over his shoulders as he was greeted by commissioner Roger Goodell on stage on Day 3.

TEXAS TIES The Dolphins drafted Texas Tech's Jacob Rodriguez and Caleb Douglas on Day 2 and Texas' Trey Moore, Michael Taaffe and DJ Campbell on Day 3. The two Red Raiders join linebacker Jordyn Brooks, and the three Longhorns join quarterback Quinn Ewers, a seventh-round pick in 2025. Miami also has top veterans from Texas A&M (De'Von Achane, Tyrel Dodson), Houston (Patrick Paul) and Texas State (Aaron Brewer), among other Texas connections.

SCOUTING THE DOLPHINS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MIAMI

"It's addition by subtraction by moving on from Tua Tagovailoa. Besides the concussions and the interceptions, he had clearly regressed in so many areas. Tua is a cautionary tale for franchises that rush to pay the quarterback on his second deal. … Malik Willis is a classic dual-threat quarterback who should be an instant playmaker for a revamped offense built around De'Von Achane. … If there is a young player who deserves to get paid in Miami, it's Achane. Talk about a talent with a lot of speed in that guy. … The offensive line has a lot of upside, especially left tackle Patrick Paul. He's got a lot of tools. … We had some concerns about Kadyn Proctor's weight and maturity, but he seems to have it under control right now. Hopefully, he stays on this better track of diet and fitness. … Tyreek Hill's injury took away one of the more dangerous deep threats in the game. Now, it's time for the other receivers to step up, including Jalen Tolbert, Tutu Atwell and Malik Washington. The offense is a work in progress. … Zach Sieler is a cornerstone as an interior force. He's really tough to block. … Chop Robinson is a really athletic edge rusher, and Josh Uche has some moves on the other side. … Love the linebacker tandem they've put together with the Texas Tech dudes, Jordyn Brooks and Jacob Rodriguez. … They really needed a young, fast corner, and they got one in Chris Johnson. JuJu Brents is nice and tall, but he lacks an ability to track the football and stay with shiftier wide receivers. … I could see rookie Michael Taaffe beating out Lonnie Johnson Jr. at safety."

2026 DOLPHINS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Ewers, Quinn	QB	6-2	209	1	Texas	D7a-25	D7a-Mia-25
15	Miller, Cam	QB	6-0	211	1	North Dakota State	FA-26	D6c-LV-25
2	Willis, Malik	QB	6-1	225	4	Liberty	FA-GB-26	D3b-Ten-22

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28	Achane, De'Von	RB	5-9	191	3	Texas A&M	D3-23	D3-Mia-23
36	Edwards, Donovan	RB	6-1	212	1	Michigan	PS-Was-25	FA-NYJ-25
0	Gordon II, Ollie	RB	6-2	225	1	Oklahoma State	D6-25	D6-Mia-25
5	Wright, Jaylen	RB	5-10	208	2	Tennessee	D4-24	D4-Mia-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Atwell, Tutu	WR	5-9	165	5	Louisville	FA-LAR-26	D2-LAR-21
80	Conyers, Jalin	TE	6-4	265	1	Texas Tech	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
85	Dulcich, Greg	TE	6-4	245	4	UCLA	FA-25	D3-Den-22
88	Henning, AJ	WR	5-10	192	1	Northwestern	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
86	Marshall Jr., Terrace	WR	6-2	200	5	LSU	FA-26	D2-Car-21
89	Sims, Ben	TE	6-5	250	3	Baylor	FA-Min-26	FA-Min-23
1	Tolbert, Jalen	WR	6-1	195	4	South Alabama	FA-Dal-26	D3-Dal-22
87	Turner, Cole	TE	6-6	240	3	Nevada	FA-26	D5-Was-22
6	Washington, Malik	WR	5-8	195	2	Virginia	D6a-24	D6a-Mia-24
84	Washington, Tahj	WR	5-10	174	2	USC	D7-24	D7-Mia-24
81	Wease Jr., Theo	WR	6-2	210	1	Missouri	FA-25	FA-Mia-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55	Brewer, Aaron	OL	6-1	295	6	Texas State	FA-Ten-24	FA-Ten-20
66	Daniels, Braeden	T	6-4	297	2	Utah	FA-26	D4-Was-23
67	Heck, Charlie	T	6-8	311	6	North Carolina	FA-TB-26	D4-Hou-20
73	Jackson, Austin	OL	6-5	310	6	USC	D1b-20	D1b-Mia-20
60	Meyer, Andrew	OL	6-3	295	2	UTEP	FA-24	FA-Mia-24
52	Paul, Patrick	T	6-7	326	2	Houston	D2-24	D2-Mia-24
68	Priebe, Josh	OL	6-5	306	1	Michigan	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
69	Salyer, Jamaree	OL	6-4	325	4	Georgia	FA-LAC-26	D6a-LAC-22
72	Savaiinaea, Jonah	OL	6-5	326	1	Arizona	D2-25	D2-Mia-25
71	Smith, Kion	OL	6-5	300	3	Fayetteville State	FA-21	FA-Atl-21
77	Warren, Carter	T	6-5	311	3	Pitt	FA-26	D4-NYJ-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
93	Biggers, Zeek	DT	6-6	319	1	Georgia Tech	D7b-25	D7b-Mia-25
91	Butler, Matthew	DT	6-3	305	3	Tennessee	W-LV-25	D5-LV-22
97	Cooper Jr., Keith	DT	6-5	280	1	Houston	FA-26	FA-Cle-25
78	Grant, Kenneth	DT	6-3	335	1	Michigan	D1-25	D1-Mia-25
96	Huntley, Alex	DT	6-4	298	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
50	Ojabo, David	DE	6-4	252	4	Michigan	FA-Bal-26	D2-Bal-22
94	Phillips, Jordan	DT	6-3	305	1	Maryland	D5a-25	D5a-Mia-25
92	Sieler, Zach	DT	6-6	300	8	Ferris State	W-Bal-19	D7-Bal-18
9	Uche, Joshua	DE	6-1	240	6	Michigan	FA-Phi-26	D2b-NE-20

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
51	Beal Jr., Robert	OLB	6-4	250	3	Georgia	FA-SF-26	D5b-SF-23
20	Brooks, Jordyn	LB	6-0	240	6	Texas Tech	FA-Sea-24	D1-Sea-20
58	Coleman, Seth	OLB	6-3	246	1	Illinois	FA-26	FA-Sea-25
25	Dodson, Tyrel	LB	6-0	237	6	Texas A&M	W-Sea-24	FA-Buf-19
40	Gay Jr., Willie	LB	6-1	246	6	Mississippi State	FA-NO-25	D2-KC-20
53	Goode, Cameron	LB	6-3	245	3	California	D7a-22	D7a-Mia-22
56	Harrison Jr., Ronnie	LB	6-3	214	8	Alabama	FA-Atl-26	D3-Jac-18
44	Robinson, Chop	LB	6-3	254	2	Penn State	D1-24	D1-Mia-24
42	Woodard, Jackson	LB	6-2	230	1	UNLV	FA-25	FA-Hou-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Anderson, Zayne	S	6-2	206	3	BYU	FA-GB-26	FA-KC-21
26	Austin, Alex	CB	6-1	191	3	Oregon State	FA-NE-26	D7-Buf-23
22	Baker Jr., Darrell	CB	6-1	190	3	Georgia Southern	FA-Ten-26	FA-Ari-22
35	Battle, Miles	CB	6-3	197	1	Utah	FA-26	FA-KC-24
27	Bonner, Ethan	CB	6-1	190	2	Stanford	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
8	Brents, JuJu	CB	6-3	198	3	Kansas State	W-Ind-25	D2-Ind-23
34	Brown, Omar	S	6-1	205	1	Nebraska	FA-26	FA-Den-24
43	Colbert, Jordan	S	6-2	218	1	Rhode Island	FA-24	FA-Mia-24
29	Duck, Storm	CB	6-0	195	2	Louisville	FA-24	FA-Mia-24
24	Green III, A.J.	CB	6-2	198	4	Oklahoma State	PS-LAR-25	FA-Cle-20
32	Johnson Jr., Lonnie	S	6-2	221	7	Kentucky	FA-LV-26	D2-Hou-19
33	Marshall Jr., Jason	CB	6-0	204	1	Florida	D5b-25	D5b-Mia-25
38	Robinson, Ethan	CB	6-0	195	1	Minnesota	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
41	Sheffield, Kendall	CB	5-11	200	5	Ohio State	FA-25	D4-Atl-19
11	Trader Jr., Dante	S	5-11	202	1	Maryland	D5c-25	D5c-Mia-25
21	Wilson, Marco	CB	5-11	191	5	Florida	FA-Cin-26	D4-Ari-21

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46	Addington, Tucker	LS	6-2	230	2	Sam Houston	FA-26	FA-Dal-22
45	Gonzalez, Zane	K	6-0	202	7	Arizona State	FA-Atl-26	D7-Cle-17
47	Patterson, Riley	K	6-0	190	5	Memphis	FA-25	FA-Min-21
48	Pinion, Bradley	P	6-5	265	11	Clemson	FA-Atl-26	D5-SF-15

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Jalen Tolbert	7	Caleb Douglas (R)
WR	4	Tutu Atwell	18	Chris Bell (R)
WR	6	Malik Washington	83	Kevin Coleman Jr. (R)
LT	52	Patrick Paul	69	Jamaree Salyer
LG	74	Kadyn Proctor (R)	63	DJ Campbell (R)
C	55	Aaron Brewer	60	Andrew Meyer
RG	72	Jonah Savaiinaea	71	Kion Smith
RT	73	Austin Jackson	67	Charlie Heck
TE	85	Greg Dulcich	82	Will Kacmarek (R)
QB	2	Malik Willis	14	Quinn Ewers
RB	28	De'Von Achane	5	Jaylen Wright

DEFENSE

DE	9	Josh Uche	50	David Ojabo
DT	92	Zach Sieler	91	Matthew Butler
DT	78	Kenneth Grant	93	Zeek Biggers
DL	94	Jordan Phillips	57	Max Llewellyn (R)
SLB	44	Chop Robinson	17	Trey Moore (R)
MLB	10	Jacob Rodriguez (R)	25	Tyrel Dodson
WLB	20	Jordyn Brooks	19	Kyle Louis (R)
CB	3	Chris Johnson (R)	8	JuJu Brents
CB	22	Darrell Baker Jr.	33	Jason Marshall Jr.
S	11	Dante Trader Jr.	31	Michael Taaffe (R)
S	32	Lonnie Johnson Jr.	23	Zayne Anderson

SPECIALISTS

K	47	Riley Patterson	KR	6	Malik Washington
P	48	Bradley Pinion	PR	6	Malik Washington

4.4 De'Von Achane led all qualifying NFL running backs by averaging 4.4 yards after contact per rushing attempt.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Kadyn Proctor	OT	6-7	352	Alabama
1	Chris Johnson	CB	6-0	193	San Diego State
2	Jacob Rodriguez	ILB	6-1	235	Texas Tech
3	Caleb Douglas	WR	6-4	205	Texas Tech
3	Will Kacmarek	TE	6-6	258	Ohio State
3	Chris Bell	WR	6-2	220	Louisville
4	Trey Moore	LB	6-2	243	Texas
4	Kyle Louis	LB	6-0	220	Pitt
5	Michael Taaffe	S	6-0	190	Texas
5	Kevin Coleman Jr.	WR	5-10	180	Missouri
5	Seydou Traore	TE	6-4	235	Mississippi State
6	DJ Campbell	G	6-3	321	Texas
7	Max Llewellyn	Edge	6-5	263	Iowa

This 13-player class represents an emphasis on toughness and physicality that will be the Dolphins' identity under the new regime. The Kadyn Proctor pick highlights a mindset of building from the inside out and getting bigger and stronger, and Will Kacmarek in the third round falls in line as a strong blocker. Chris Johnson gives them a much-needed cover corner in a highly questionable secondary. Jacob Rodriguez will be a team leader in due time and active around the ball, with a propensity to punch it out for forced fumbles. A deficiency in the class comes in not securing an edge defender until Day 3, and there were a few reaches as well.

PATRIOTS

AFC EAST FORECAST
2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 9	AT SEATTLE	8:20
SEPT. 20	**PITTSBURGH**	**1:00**
SEPT. 27	AT JACKSONVILLE	1:00
OCT. 4	AT BUFFALO	1:00
OCT. 11	**LAS VEGAS**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
OCT. 22	AT CHICAGO	8:15
NOV. 1	AT MIAMI	4:25
NOV. 8	**GREEN BAY**	**4:25**
NOV. 15	**DETROIT (MUNICH)**	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 29	AT L.A. CHARGERS	8:20
DEC. 6	**BUFFALO**	**4:25**
DEC. 10	**MINNESOTA**	**8:15**
DEC. 21	AT KANSAS CITY	8:15
DEC. 27	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
TBD	**DENVER**	
TBD	**MIAMI**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2022	8
2023	4
2024	4
2025 SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	14

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **MIKE VRABEL**
Record With Team: **14-3**
Career Record: **68-48**
Offensive Coordinator: **JOSH McDANIELS**
Defensive Coordinator: **ZAK KUHR**
Special Teams Coordinator: **JEREMY SPRINGER**
Quarterbacks: **ASHTON GRANT**
Running Backs: **TONY DEWS**
Wide Receivers: **TODD DOWNING**
Tight Ends/Passing Game Coordinator: **THOMAS BROWN**
Offensive Line: **DOUG MARRONE**
Defensive Line: **CLINTON MCMILLAN**
Inside Linebackers: **VINNY DePALMA**
Outside Linebackers: **MIKE SMITH**
Cornerbacks: **JUSTIN HAMILTON**
Secondary: **SCOTT BOOKER**

It's no secret that the New England Patriots exceeded expectations last season. But that just means they have that much more to prove in 2026. While many of their top players will be returning, they also lost some key talent during free agency as well as adding some additional depth. However, the Patriots still have their cornerstones of their team, with head coach Mike Vrabel leading the way and quarterback Drake Maye manning the pocket. And if Year 1 is any indication, this duo is a true recipe for success.

The Patriots dealt with a lot of talk about strength of schedule last year, and that will once again be a part of the conversation, but this time it's at the opposite end of the difficulty spectrum. The Patriots face off against several playoff teams, including a Super Bowl LX rematch with the Seattle Seahawks. There are also games against the Chicago Bears, Detroit Lions, Kansas City Chiefs and Jacksonville Jaguars, just to highlight a few.

Unlike last year, New England didn't make many major splashes in free agency, instead bringing in mostly depth pieces. However, there were exceptions — safety Kevin Byard III, who was named first-team All-Pro last season for the third time in his career. Romeo Doubs is another key arrival after tallying 55 catches for 724 yards and six touchdowns with the Green Bay Packers last year.

OFFENSE

Drake Maye. That's the main name that comes to mind when one thinks about the Patriots' offense. In his second season in the league, Maye put together an MVP-caliber season, finishing as runner-up to Matthew Stafford for the honor. And it was his first year spent working with offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels in a new system, too. Going into the 2026 season, Maye will have had an entire offseason to refine his skills and gain comfort with the offense; now, the hope is that he will take that next step and become a consistent MVP threat. Tommy DeVito will serve as Maye's backup, and New England also brought in rookie Behren Morton to fill the third spot that opened up when the team released Joshua Dobbs.

As for Maye's targets, the addition of Doubs fills that veteran void that opened up with the release of Stefon Diggs, with Kayshon Boutte, Mack Hollins, DeMario Douglas and Kyle Williams also having provided significant contributions last season.

Maye still has one of his favorite targets in tight end Hunter Henry. The team let Austin Hooper walk in free agency and drafted Notre Dame tight end Eli Raridon to serve as Henry's backup.

Another big offensive addition that was considered likely at press time: A.J. Brown. A trade between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Patriots for the mercurial wide receiver was expected after June 1.

The running back position remains unchanged from last season, as the Patriots still have Rhamondre Stevenson and TreVeyon Henderson leading the way. The team did release veteran Antonio Gibson, but that doesn't change the outlook much, considering he was sidelined for most of the 2025 season after tearing his ACL. Rookie Jam Miller is expected to be at the top of the list to fill Gibson's role on the depth chart. One of the most exciting additions is Reggie Gilliam, as McDaniels finally brings in a true fullback.

After years of offensive line struggles, the Patriots seemed to have found a groove last year, with a stable lineup starting each week outside of a few injuries.

DRAKE MAYE
QUARTERBACK

KYLE TERADA-IMAGN IMAGES

Morgan Moses took over at right tackle, with Mike Onwenu at right guard. Garrett Bradbury was at center, with rookie Jared Wilson at left guard and the team's 2025 first-round pick Will Campbell at left tackle. Four of the five are returning this season, but Wilson will slide back to center, as Bradbury was traded to the Bears, and the team signed guard Alijah Vera-Tucker to play on the left side.

DEFENSE

Terrell Williams began the 2025 season as defensive coordinator but stepped away after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Outside linebackers coach Zak Kuhr took over for Williams and was officially promoted to defensive coordinator for the 2026 season, with Williams moving to assistant head coach.

Up front, Milton Williams and Christian Barmore proved to be a dynamic duo, with Williams often living up to Vrabel's "big dogs eat in January" mantra throughout the postseason. Harold Landry III led the team in sacks during the regular season and will be back and possibly better than ever, having had time to recover from his knee injury. K'Lavon Chaisson was next on that list but signed with the Washington Commanders in free agency. New England replaced him by signing Dre'Mont Jones as well as drafting Gabe Jacas (Illinois) in the second round.

Inside linebacker and captain Robert Spillane, who also dealt with an ankle injury last season, is back after avoiding offseason surgery and spending a lot of time around the facility the past few months to come back stronger.

The secondary remains the same, with New England having picked up cornerback Christian Gonzalez's fifth-year option in hopes of signing him to a long-term deal. Carlton Davis III will hold down the other side. At safety, Craig Woodson had a promising rookie season, but after losing Jaylinn Hawkins in free agency, the Patriots brought in veteran Byard, the league leader in interceptions (seven) last season and someone who will provide veteran leadership.

SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Andy Borregales and punter Bryce Baringer are expected to hold down the fort, with gunner Brenden Schooler back as well. The Patriots drafted long-snapper Julian Ashby last season to replace Joe Cardona and also signed free agent Niko Lalos. Marcus Jones will remain the team's top punt returner, but kickoff returner is a bit more of a question, with Efton Chism III, Kyle Williams and Henderson all having helped the team in that department last season. It will be an interesting battle to monitor, as some surprising players can earn a roster spot by making an impact on special teams.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Patriots put a major emphasis on adding depth pieces this offseason, which can certainly come in handy during the long and grueling NFL season. Last season, New England remained fairly healthy, but nobody knows what will happen at any time, making the "next man up" mentality essential.

After a trip to the Super Bowl, expectations are high for the Patriots, and it will be crucial for organizational momentum to maintain that level of success. That's not to say it's Super Bowl or bust, but the Patriots have returned to elite status, and that's a reputation that the organization wants to keep.

All eyes will be on Maye, who must follow up his incredible 2025 performance by taking another step forward. And then there's the defense, a unit that had a slower start than the offense but one that found its groove as the year went on and now has a hard-earned reputation for physicality and aggressiveness.

2025 RESULTS (14-3)

Sept. 7	Las Vegas	L	13-20
Sept. 14	**AT MIAMI**	**W**	**33-27**
Sept. 21	Pittsburgh	L	14-21
Sept. 28	**CAROLINA**	**W**	**42-13**
Oct. 5	**AT BUFFALO**	**W**	**23-20**
Oct. 12	**AT NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**25-19**
Oct. 19	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**31-13**
Oct. 26	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**32-13**
Nov. 2	**ATLANTA**	**W**	**24-23**
Nov. 9	**AT TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**28-23**
Nov. 13	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**27-14**
Nov. 23	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**26-20**
Dec. 1	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**33-15**
Dec. 14	Buffalo	L	31-35
Dec. 21	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**28-24**
Dec. 28	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**42-10**
Jan. 4	**MIAMI**	**W**	**38-10**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**16-3**
Jan. 18	**HOUSTON**	**W**	**28-16**
Jan. 25	**AT DENVER**	**W**	**10-7**
Feb. 8	Seattle	L	13-29

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	379.4	3	1
RUSHING	128.9	6	3
PASSING	250.5	4	1
SCORING	28.8	2	1
THIRD DOWN %	42.9	6	4
POINTS/PLAY	0.427	8	5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	295.2	8	6
RUSHING	101.7	6	4
PASSING	193.5	9	6
SCORING	18.8	4	3
INTERCEPTIONS	10	T18	T10
SACKS	35	T22	T11
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.304	4	3
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+3	10	4

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
DRAKE MAYE	492	354	4,394	31	8
JOSHUA DOBBS	10	7	65	0	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
TREVEYON HENDERSON	180	911	5.1	9
RHAMONDRE STEVENSON	130	603	4.6	7
DRAKE MAYE	103	450	4.4	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
STEFON DIGGS	85	1,013	11.9	4
HUNTER HENRY	60	768	12.8	7
MACK HOLLINS	46	550	12.0	2
TREVEYON HENDERSON	35	221	6.3	1
KAYSHON BOUTTE	33	551	16.7	6

KICKING: Andy Borregales, 27-32 FGs, 53-55 PATs, 134 points; **TACKLES:** Robert Spillane, 97; Christian Elliss, 94; **SACKS:** Harold Landry III, 8.5; K'Lavon Chaisson, 7.5; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Jaylinn Hawkins, 4; Marcus Jones, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HALL CALL Rob Gronkowski was in the sauna when he received a call from owner Robert Kraft (that went to voicemail), informing him that he was being inducted into the Patriots Hall of Fame as a first-ballot honoree. The tight end called it "such a prestigious honor," taking a moment to reflect on key moments — including when he fell asleep during his pre-draft meeting with New England. And of course, he had to mention all the Super Bowl victories. "When I listened to the voicemail last night, it was a very special one that I'm going to keep forever," Gronkowski said. "It's one of the only few voicemails I'll keep for the rest of my life."

RALLYING AROUND VRABES Head coach **Mike Vrabel** was wrapped up in a well-publicized controversy ahead of the 2026 NFL Draft, and he admitted that he was taking "accountability for my actions and the actions that caused a distraction to the people that I care most about: my family, this football team, the organization and our fans." Despite the distraction, players showed their support. Tight end Hunter Henry said that the head coach did "a great job" when speaking with the team about the situation, while also saying he's "been the same Vrabes, bringing a lot of energy in the room." Linebacker Robert Spillane added that he was "going to be here to support him, as he would be there to support me through anything."

MORTON'S DELIVERY SERVICE The Patriots selected Texas Tech quarterback Behren Morton in the seventh round. Morton has made it clear that he's willing to do whatever he can do to help, even if that includes making a special run for Drake Maye. "If he needs a coffee from Starbucks, I'm there for Drake," he said.

NEW LOOK Maye always looks to give back to the community, so he took part in the 13th annual "Saving by Shaving" event, with proceeds benefiting Boston Children's Hospital. With the help of his wife, Ann Michael Maye, the quarterback shaved his head.

SCOUTING THE PATRIOTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ENGLAND

"From what I've heard, the locker room has Mike Vrabel's back. The scandal wasn't a good look, obviously, and raises serious questions about his poor judgment and blurs the lines about journalistic integrity. The bottom line, though, is that he's a strong leader. Winning matters the most, not morals, and the league isn't planning to punish Vrabes. If they're off to a good start, this story eventually fades. … Drake Maye and Josh McDaniels are cooking, and this is just the start. Maye has more untapped potential. … It's unfortunate that the Patriots moved on from Stefon Diggs. He did a good job for them, and he was acquitted in his legal case. They already moved on with signing Romeo Doubs to go with Kayshon Boutte, Mack Hollins and DeMario Douglas. … Didn't like what I saw in the Super Bowl from left tackle Will Campbell, and I still think he would be a better guard. Caleb Lomu is a better long-term answer at left tackle, in my opinion. … More TreVeyon Henderson would be a good idea this season. Still like Rhamondre Stevenson's power and big-play capabilities. … Milton Williams is one of the more disruptive defensive linemen in the league. … I like what I've seen from Dre'Mont Jones and Christian Barmore a lot. … We had a high grade on their rookie edge, Gabe Jacas. … The other linebackers are a bit underrated: Christian Elliss, Robert Spillane and Harold Landry III. … Christian Gonzalez is the consummate cover corner. … Carlton Davis III had a resurgent year. … The safety tandem of Kevin Byard III and Craig Woodson is solid."

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 PATRIOTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	DeVito, Tommy	QB	6-2	210	3	Illinois	W-NYG-25	FA-NYG-23
10	Maye, Drake	QB	6-4	225	2	North Carolina	D1-24	D1-NE-24

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Gilliam, Reggie	FB	6-0	244	6	Toledo	FA-Buf-26	FA-Buf-20
32	Henderson, TreVeyon	RB	5-10	202	1	Ohio State	D2-25	D2-NE-25
26	Jennings, Terrell	RB	6-0	217	1	Florida A&M	FA-24	FA-NE-24
46	Lampe, Brock	FB	6-1	249	1	Northern Illinois	FA-25	FA-NE-25
34	Larison, Lan	RB	5-11	209	1	UC Davis	FA-25	FA-NE-25
38	Stevenson, Rhamondre	RB	6-0	227	5	Oklahoma	D4-21	D4-NE-21
37	Westover, Jack	FB	6-2	245	1	Washington	FA-24	FA-Sea-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9	Boutte, Kayshon	WR	5-11	197	3	LSU	D6a-23	D6a-NE-23
86	Chism III, Efton	WR	5-10	198	1	Eastern Washington	FA-25	FA-NE-25
81	Dippre, C.J.	TE	6-5	256	1	Alabama	FA-25	FA-NE-25
87	Doubs, Romeo	WR	6-2	204	4	Nevada	FA-GB-26	D4a-GB-22
3	Douglas, DeMario	WR	5-8	192	3	Liberty	D6c-23	D6c-NE-23
85	Henry, Hunter	TE	6-5	249	10	Arkansas	FA-LAC-21	D2-LAC-16
80	Hill, Julian	TE	6-4	251	3	Campbell	FA-Mia-26	FA-Mia-23
13	Hollins, Mack	WR	6-4	221	9	North Carolina	FA-Buf-25	D4-Phi-17
29	Webb, Jeremiah	WR	5-11	198	1	South Alabama	FA-25	FA-NE-25
18	Williams, Kyle	WR	5-11	190	1	Washington State	D3a-25	D3a-NE-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
77	Brown, Ben	C	6-5	313	4	Ole Miss	FA-24	FA-Cin-22
52	Bryant, Marcus	T	6-7	320	1	Missouri	D7a-25	D7a-NE-25
63	Butler, Mehki	G	6-3	310	1	Arkansas State	FA-25	FA-NE-25
66	Campbell, Will	T	6-6	319	1	LSU	D1-25	D1-NE-25
51	Hudson III, James	OL	6-5	313	5	Cincinnati	FA-NYG-26	D4a-Cle-21
72	Metz, Lorenz	T	6-9	330	1	Cincinnati	FA-26	FA-TB-24
76	Moses, Morgan	T	6-6	320	12	Virginia	FA-NYJ-25	D3a-Was-14
71	Onwenu, Mike	OL	6-3	350	6	Michigan	D6a-20	D6a-NE-20
67	Rupcich, Andrew	G	6-6	325	2	Culver-Stockton	FA-25	FA-Ten-22
75	Vera-Tucker, Alijah	OL	6-5	308	5	USC	FA-NYJ-26	D1b-NYJ-21
70	Wallace, Caedan	OL	6-5	314	2	Penn State	D3-24	D3-NE-24
55	Wilson, Jared	OL	6-3	310	1	Georgia	D3b-25	D3b-NE-25

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90	Barmore, Christian	DE	6-5	315	5	Alabama	D2-21	D2-NE-21
94	Durden, Cory	DT	6-4	305	3	NC State	FA-25	FA-Det-23
92	Farmer, Joshua	DE	6-3	312	1	Florida State	D4b-25	D4b-NE-25
95	Gregory, Eric	DT	6-3	319	1	Arkansas	W-Cin-25	FA-Cin-25
98	Pharms Jr., Jeremiah	DT	6-2	300	3	Friends	FA-22	FA-NE-22
93	Taylor III, Leonard	DE	6-3	305	2	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	FA-NYJ-24
97	Williams, Milton	DE	6-3	290	5	Louisiana Tech	FA-Phi-25	D3-Phi-21

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35	Britt, K.J.	LB	6-0	240	5	Auburn	FA-Mia-26	D5-TB-21
53	Elliss, Christian	LB	6-2	231	4	Idaho	W-Phi-23	FA-Min-21
99	Gainer, Amari	LB	6-3	240	2	North Carolina	FA-25	FA-LV-24
5	Jones, Dre'Mont	OLB	6-3	265	7	Ohio State	FA-Bal-26	D3-Den-19
2	Landry III, Harold	OLB	6-2	252	8	Boston College	FA-Ten-25	D2-Ten-18
42	Luketa, Jesse	LB	6-3	253	3	Penn State	FA-26	D7b-Ari-22
49	Muma, Chad	LB	6-3	239	4	Wyoming	FA-25	D3-Jac-22
91	Ponder, Elijah	OLB	6-3	261	1	Cal Poly	FA-25	FA-NE-25
54	Reese, Otis	LB	6-3	214	3	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Ten-23
14	Spillane, Robert	LB	6-1	229	7	Western Michigan	FA-LV-25	FA-Ten-18
43	Swinson, Bradyn	OLB	6-4	255	1	LSU	D5-25	D5-NE-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33	Brown, Mike	S	6-1	218	3	Miami (Ohio)	FA-Ten-26	FA-Min-22
31	Byard III, Kevin	S	5-11	218	10	Middle Tennessee	FA-Chi-26	D3-Ten-16
7	Davis III, Carlton	CB	6-1	206	8	Auburn	FA-Det-25	D2c-TB-18
27	Dial Jr., Marcellas	CB	6-0	190	2	South Carolina	D6a-24	D6a-NE-24
0	Gonzalez, Christian	CB	6-1	205	3	Oregon	D1-23	D1-NE-23
25	Jones, Marcus	CB	5-8	188	4	Houston	D3-22	D3-NE-22
19	Minor, Kobee	DB	5-11	188	1	Memphis	D7c-25	D7c-NE-25
24	Pettus, Dell	S	5-11	200	2	Troy	FA-24	FA-NE-24
23	Saunders Jr., John	S	6-2	211	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Mia-25
41	Schooler, Brenden	S	6-2	210	4	Texas	FA-22	FA-NE-22
28	Vildor, Kindle	CB	5-11	189	6	Georgia Southern	FA-TB-26	D5-Chi-20
22	Woods, Charles	CB	5-11	185	2	SMU	W-LAR-25	FA-LAR-24
4	Woodson, Craig	S	6-0	200	1	Cal	D4a-25	D4a-NE-25

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
47	Ashby, Julian	LS	6-1	231	1	Vanderbilt	D7b-25	D7b-NE-25
17	Baringer, Bryce	P	6-2	215	3	Michigan State	D6b-23	D6b-NE-23
36	Borregales, Andy	K	5-11	202	1	Miami (Fla.)	D6-25	D6-NE-25
62	Lalos, Niko	LS	6-5	269	2	Dartmouth	FA-26	FA-NYG-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	9	Kayshon Boutte	18	Kyle Williams
WR	87	Romeo Doubs	3	DeMario Douglas
WR	13	Mack Hollins	86	Efton Chism III
LT	66	Will Campbell	68	Dametrious Crownover (R)
LG	75	Alijah Vera-Tucker	70	Caedan Wallace
C	58	Jared Wilson	77	Ben Brown
RG	71	Mike Onwenu	67	Andrew Rupcich
RT	76	Morgan Moses	74	Caleb Lomu (R)
TE	85	Hunter Henry	82	Eli Raridon (R)
QB	10	Drake Maye	16	Tommy DeVito
RB	38	Rhamondre Stevenson	32	TreVeyon Henderson

DEFENSE

DE	90	Christian Barmore	93	Leonard Taylor III
DT	94	Cory Durden	95	Eric Gregory
DE	97	Milton Williams	92	Joshua Farmer
OLB	2	Harold Landry III	50	Gabe Jacas (R)
ILB	14	Robert Spillane	35	K.J. Britt
ILB	53	Christian Elliss	48	Namdi Obiazor (R)
OLB	5	Dre'Mont Jones	43	Bradyn Swinson
CB	0	Christian Gonzalez	22	Charles Woods
CB	7	Carlton Davis III	21	Karon Prunty (R)
SS	4	Craig Woodson	24	Dell Pettus
FS	31	Kevin Byard III	41	Brenden Schooler

SPECIALISTS

K	36	Andy Borregales	KR	8	Kyle Williams
P	17	Bryce Baringer	PR	25	Marcus Jones

+9.1%

Drake Maye led all qualifying QBs in completion percentage over expected per NFL Next Gen Stats at +9.1%.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Caleb Lomu	OT	6-6	313	Utah
2	Gabe Jacas	Edge	6-4	261	Illinois
3	Eli Raridon	TE	6-6	245	Notre Dame
5	Karon Prunty	CB	6-1	192	Wake Forest
6	Dametrious Crownover	OT	6-7	319	Texas A&M
6	Namdi Obiazor	LB	6-3	229	TCU
7	Behren Morton	QB	6-2	218	Texas Tech
7	Jam Miller	RB	5-10	209	Alabama
7	Quintayvious Hutchins	Edge	6-3	245	Boston College

The Patriots addressed numerous key needs, taking players who can make an immediate impact while also preparing for the future. Based on the team taking two offensive tackles, it's clear that their main concern is protecting quarterback Drake Maye at all costs, with Caleb Lomu expected to eventually step into the 35-year-old Morgan Moses' role, while Dametrious Crownover will serve as a swing tackle. Defensively, Gabe Jacas has high upside and could ultimately be a steal for the Patriots in the second round. Like Lomu, Eli Raridon provides depth while also being someone who can eventually replace an aging Hunter Henry (31). The Patriots also beefed up their defense with Karon Prunty and Namdi Obiazor.

NY JETS

AFC EAST FORECAST

3

Is this finally the year the New York Jets end their playoff drought?

If they do, it would be a welcome surprise for their long-suffering fans — and a tremendous boost for second-year head coach Aaron Glenn, who is trying to stay off the hot seat after last season's disastrous 3-14 debut.

Saddled with 10 straight losing seasons and 15 consecutive years without a playoff trip — the longest active postseason drought in North American pro sports — the Jets head into 2026 showing some encouraging signs in their seemingly never-ending rebuilding process.

They added culture-changing leaders to their defense (linebacker Demario Davis and safety Minkah Fitzpatrick). They drafted two dynamic first-round playmakers to boost their offense (wide receiver Omar Cooper Jr. and tight end Kenyon Sadiq).

But they still lack a legit, long-term quarterback solution. They probably will use next year's draft to address that major issue. For now, though, Geno Smith remains hopeful that he can revive his career — right back where he started it as a disappointing second-round pick.

Glenn does not need to make the playoffs this year to keep his job. But he absolutely must put together more respectable showings than the Jets delivered for most of 2025.

OFFENSE

Smith, 35, sure seems like a so-called bridge quarterback. He will play this season on a one-year contract while believing he can rediscover the production he showed in Seattle from 2022-24, before things went sideways last season in Las Vegas.

He was an immature player when he began his NFL career with the Jets from 2013-16. Before the 2015 season, teammate IK Enemkpali punched him in the face over a $600 unpaid debt. Now, 11 years later, Smith brings a lot more maturity and experience.

He has a chance to provide some stability to the Jets' offense, especially since Cooper and Sadiq — two freakish athletes who can be used in multiple ways — will help draw coverage away from No. 1 wide receiver Garrett Wilson. That's something Wilson has desperately sought (and rarely found) through his first four seasons.

Sadiq stands out as a fascinating addition. He can run every route, and he destroys coverages down the seam. A do-it-all tight end who is already powerfully built, Sadiq is a solid blocker and accelerates superbly after the catch. New offensive coordinator Frank Reich will love the versatility he offers.

Still, the Jets need Wilson to be a big-time difference-maker and downfield threat, as he was from 2022-24, before he stumbled through an injury-plagued 2025 season.

In the backfield, Breece Hall continues to give the Jets a versatile tailback whom they can use as a weapon in the passing game. He is a tackle-breaking machine and a three-down player who willingly and capably handles blocking duties.

The Jets used first-round picks in both the 2024 and '25 drafts to shore up their left and right tackle spots with Olu Fashanu and Armand Membou, both of whom will provide excellent pass-blocking skills, provided they continue to perform as they did last year.

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
SEPT. 20	**GREEN BAY**	**1:00**
SEPT: 27	AT DETROIT	1:00
OCT. 4	AT CHICAGO	1:00
OCT. 11	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	AT NEW ENGLAND	1:00
OCT. 25	**MIAMI**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	**LAS VEGAS**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	AT KANSAS CITY	1:00
NOV. 15	**BUFFALO**	**1:00**
NOV. 22	AT L.A. CHARGERS	4:05
NOV. 29	AT MIAMI	1:00
DEC. 6	BYE	
DEC. 13	**DENVER**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	AT ARIZONA	4:05
DEC. 27	**NEW ENGLAND**	**1:00**
JAN. 3	**MINNESOTA**	**1:00**
TBD	AT BUFFALO	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	4
2022	7
2023	7
2024	5
2025	3

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **AARON GLENN**
Record With Team: **3-14**
Career Record: **3-14**
Offensive Coordinator: **FRANK REICH**
Defensive Coordinator: **BRIAN DUKER**
Special Teams Coordinator: **CHRIS BANJO**
Quarterbacks: **BILL MUSGRAVE**
Running Backs: **NIC McKISSIC-LUKE**
Wide Receivers: **SHAWN JEFFERSON**
Tight Ends: **ALFREDO ROBERTS**
Offensive Line: **STEVE HEIDEN**
Pass Game Coordinator: **SETH RYAN**
Defensive Line: **KARL DUNBAR**
Linebackers: **BEN BOLLING**
Defensive Backs/Pass Game Coordinator: **CHRIS HARRIS**
Safeties: **RYAN SLOWIK**

BREECE HALL
RUNNING BACK

VINCENT CARCHIETTA-IMAGN IMAGES

This second-year Jets regime — Glenn and general manager Darren Mougey — has the pieces in place for a young quarterback, presuming they can land the right guy in next year's draft. In the meantime, they just need Smith to deliver some competitive and competent results in 2026 — or else owner Woody Johnson might get antsy and opt for more changes to his franchise's leadership.

DEFENSE

Probably the biggest change for this side of the ball is the man running the show. Glenn will now call the Jets' defensive plays, replacing coordinator Steve Wilks, whom he fired in December. "To me, play-calling is my superpower," Glenn says. "I really missed doing that, and I think it's a huge part of helping us become the team that I see us becoming."

Glenn thrived as the Detroit Lions' defensive coordinator from 2021-24. It helped that he had excellent pass-rushers. He now has exactly that with the Jets, as this year's No. 2 overall draft pick — David Bailey — will play on the edge opposite Will McDonald IV. They should terrorize quarterbacks. But will they be able to stop the run? That question looms large, considering their size issues.

Glenn and Mougey made a point this offseason of adding valuable veteran leadership to their defense, since the group lacked direction last season.

Davis is considered one of the NFL's best on-field and locker room leaders, so he should provide an immediate boost in that regard, even at 37.

Fitzpatrick, 29, is out to prove he remains a legit disruptor and ball hawk in the back end. With 21 career interceptions, he should give the Jets a critically important coverage asset as they try to rack up more picks. They had exactly zero of them in 2025, so there's nowhere for them to go but up in that department.

In the secondary, Fitzpatrick will be an excellent mentor for cornerback D'Angelo Ponds, a fascinating second-round pick who will start from the get-go. Ponds has a tremendous amount of confidence and tenacity when matching up. Despite being undersized, he uses speed to keep up when in press man-to-man coverage. The Jets love his instincts.

It'll help Ponds that he has a fiery, small former cornerback, Glenn, dictating the mindset and scheme of this determined Jets defense, with its newfound infusion of leadership.

SPECIALISTS

The Jets lost kicker Nick Folk to the Atlanta Falcons in free agency. Will that loom large for an offense that has struggled to score points for years? Cade York, 25, is 16 years younger than Folk and has a much less extensive track record, with only 45 career field-goal attempts.

Punter Austin McNamara returns for Year 2. The Jets will rely on him to control the field position game if Smith and Co. struggle.

Kene Nwangwu (five career kickoff return touchdowns) is a potential game-changer, while Isaiah Williams took two punts to the house last year.

The special teams shined in 2025 — one of the only positives amid another miserable season. The Jets finished third in Pro Football Focus' special teams ratings.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Jets fans are bracing themselves for another long year. And no one can really blame them at this point.

With the Jets not going all-in on a veteran quarterback (like they did with Aaron Rodgers) or taking a big swing at a first-round pick (like Ty Simpson), they'll lean into a short-term fix for the second straight year after enduring Justin Fields' struggles in 2025. But enough of a foundation is in place for the Jets to give their fans a whole lot more this year, though that's a low bar to clear. The Jets embarrassed themselves while closing last season with five straight losses by scores of 34-10, 48-20, 29-6, 42-10 and 35-8.

Glenn cannot afford a repeat of that early in 2026 — or else he won't be around for the next quarterback.

2025 RESULTS (3-14)

Sept. 7	Pittsburgh	L	32-34
Sept. 14	Buffalo	L	10-30
Sept. 21	at Tampa Bay	L	27-29
Sept. 29	at Miami	L	21-27
Oct. 5	Dallas	L	22-37
Oct. 12	Denver	L	11-13
Oct. 19	Carolina	L	6-13
Oct. 26	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**39-38**
Nov. 9	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**27-20**
Nov. 13	at New England	L	14-27
Nov. 23	at Baltimore	L	10-23
Nov. 30	**ATLANTA**	**W**	**27-24**
Dec. 7	Miami	L	10-34
Dec. 14	at Jacksonville	L	20-48
Dec. 21	at New Orleans	L	6-29
Dec. 28	New England	L	10-42
Jan. 4	at Buffalo	L	8-35

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	263.6	29	13
RUSHING	123.3	T10	4
PASSING	140.3	32	16
SCORING	17.6	29	13
THIRD DOWN %	34.9	26	12
POINTS/PLAY	0.297	28	13

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	355.6	25	14
RUSHING	139.5	25	15
PASSING	216.1	17	9
SCORING	29.6	31	16
INTERCEPTIONS	0	32	16
SACKS	26	31	16
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.466	29	14
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-19	32	16

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JUSTIN FIELDS	204	128	1,259	7	1
TYROD TAYLOR	134	80	779	5	5
BRADY COOK	153	88	739	2	7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
BREECE HALL	243	1,065	4.4	4
JUSTIN FIELDS	71	383	5.4	4
ISAIAH DAVIS	43	236	5.5	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
MASON TAYLOR	44	369	8.4	1
BREECE HALL	36	350	9.7	1
GARRETT WILSON	36	395	11.0	4
JOHN METCHIE III	29	256	8.8	2

KICKING: Nick Folk, 28-29 FGs, 22-22 PATs, 106 points
TACKLES: Jamien Sherwood, 154; Malachi Moore, 101
SACKS: Will McDonald IV, 8.0; Jowon Briggs, 4.0
INTERCEPTIONS: None

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BROTHERLY LOVE Last year, the Jets drafted Miami (Fla.) linebacker **Francisco "Kiko" Mauigoa** in Round 5. This year, the crosstown rival Giants took his younger brother, Hurricanes offensive tackle Francis "Sisi" Mauigoa, with the 10th overall selection. The brothers, who were raised in American Samoa, are considering living together in northern New Jersey, where their NFL teams are headquartered. They were roommates in college and even moved their parents from their home island to Miami by combining their NIL incomes.

OLD PALS REUNITED When Jets head coach Aaron Glenn hired Frank Reich to be his offensive coordinator this offseason, it was a full-circle moment for both men. As a player, Reich spent one season with the Jets, in 1996, when he opened the year as their backup quarterback but wound up starting seven games. Reich, then 34, met a third-year cornerback that season who was just beginning to dominate — Glenn. Now reunited as colleagues, they're aiming for better results than 1996, when the Jets went 1-15 under Rich Kotite.

FAMILIAR NAME Seth Ryan grew up around the Jets. Now, he is their new passing game coordinator — at just 32. His father, Rex, coached the team from 2009-14. And Seth's paternal grandfather, Buddy, spent a significant stretch of Rex's childhood (1968-75) as the franchise's defensive line coach. Buddy was on the sideline for Super Bowl III with the Jets during his first season coaching in the NFL. Can Seth help the Jets make their long-awaited return to the big game?

GIVING BACK Demario Davis started his career with the Jets from 2012-15, after they drafted him in Round 3. He returned for a one-season stint in 2017 and then became a beloved community figure and an excellent player with the New Orleans Saints from 2018-25. Now 37, Davis is back with the Jets. A father of five, he loves helping kids. Davis and his wife, Tamela, run the Devoted Dreamers Academy, a youth leadership program that teaches students character-building and life skills.

SCOUTING THE JETS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK

"Aaron Glenn kept his job, but this is arguably the hottest seat in the NFL. And Frank Reich, his new offensive coordinator, could wind up as interim coach if the Jets don't start winning games. The pressure is real on Glenn. … Not so much pressure on general manager Darren Mougey. He has proven himself as a good drafter who has made some solid trades. … The Jets are well-positioned to capitalize on the 2027 quarterback crop with Geno Smith as the placeholder and not the long-term answer. … They don't lack key pieces on offense. Running back Breece Hall is fast and makes sharp cuts. … Garrett Wilson is one of the more explosive route-runners in the league. … Omar Cooper Jr. was a really solid draft pick. … Not a lot of more dynamic tight end tandems than Mason Taylor and Kenyon Sadiq, who crushed the NFL Scouting Combine testing. … The offensive line is not bad. They're taking some good steps with Armand Membou and Olu Fashanu. … When nose tackle T'Vondre Sweat has his weight under control, which he has lately, he's a force. … David Bailey should bring a lot of heat off the edge along with Joseph Ossai and Will McDonald IV. … With Demario Davis, Harrison Phillips and David Onyemata, the defense has proven vets who should provide leadership and chemistry. Defense has to create more turnovers. Last year's lack of interceptions was embarrassing. … Having Minkah Fitzpatrick and Andre Cisco as the safeties should help. ... D'Angelo Ponds is a really sharp young nickel. … Not sold on Cade York as their kicker."

ROBERT DEUTSCH-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 JETS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Cook, Brady	QB	6-2	214	1	Missouri	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
7	Smith, Geno	QB	6-2	221	13	West Virginia	T-LV-26	D2-NYJ-13
11	Zappe, Bailey	QB	6-1	215	4	WKU	FA-26	D4-NE-22

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0	Allen, Braelon	RB	6-1	235	2	Wisconsin	D4-24	D4-NYJ-24
47	Beck, Andrew	FB	6-3	255	6	Texas	FA-25	FA-NE-19
32	Davis, Isaiah	RB	6-1	220	2	South Dakota State	D5b-24	D5b-NYJ-24
20	Hall, Breece	RB	5-11	217	4	Iowa State	D2-22	D2-NYJ-22
3	Nwangwu, Kene	RB	6-1	210	5	Iowa State	FA-24	D4-Min-21

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19	Charles, Irvin	WR	6-4	219	3	Indiana (Pa.)	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22
15	Mitchell, Adonai	WR	6-2	205	2	Texas	T-Ind-25	D2-Ind-24
81	Pritchett, Jamaal	WR	5-8	175	1	South Alabama	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
89	Ruckert, Jeremy	TE	6-5	250	4	Ohio State	D3-22	D3-NYJ-22
88	Skinner, Quentin	WR	6-3	203	1	Kansas	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
82	Smith, Arian	WR	6-0	179	1	Georgia	D4-25	D4-NYJ-25
85	Taylor, Mason	TE	6-5	251	1	LSU	D2-25	D2-NYJ-25
18	Williams, Isaiah	WR	5-10	185	2	Illinois	PS-Cin-25	FA-Det-24
5	Wilson, Garrett	WR	6-0	183	4	Ohio State	D1b-22	D1b-NYJ-22
86	Woods, Jelani	TE	6-7	253	4	Virginia	W-Ind-25	D3a-Ind-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74	Fashanu, Olu	OL	6-6	312	2	Penn State	D1-24	D1-NYJ-24
50	Fornadel, Liam	OL	6-4	312	1	James Madison	FA-25	FA-NE-24
63	Hartwig, Gus	OL	6-5	309	1	Purdue	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
60	Levao, Kohl	OL	6-6	350	1	Hawaii	FA-24	FA-NYJ-24
70	Membou, Armand	OL	6-4	332	1	Missouri	D1-25	D1-NYJ-25
61	Mitchell, Max	OL	6-6	307	4	Louisiana	D4a-22	D4a-NYJ-22
71	Myers, Josh	C	6-5	310	5	Ohio State	FA-GB-25	D2-GB-21
65	Newman, Xavier	OL	6-2	297	3	Baylor	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
79	Okorafor, Chukwuma	OL	6-6	320	7	Western Michigan	FA-25	D3b-Pit-18
64	Parham, Dylan	G	6-2	332	4	Memphis	FA-LV-26	D3-LV-22
66	Tippmann, Joe	OL	6-6	313	3	Wisconsin	D2-23	D2-NYJ-23
67	Young, Landon	T	6-7	321	5	Kentucky	FA-NO-26	D6-NO-21

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
94	Baron, Tyler	DL	6-4	258	1	Miami (Fla.)	D5b-25	D5b-NYJ-25
91	Briggs, Jowon	DL	6-1	313	2	Cincinnati	T-Cle-25	D7b-Cle-24
54	Ekeji, Paschal	DE	6-4	230	1	Stellenbosch	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
96	Heflin, Jack	DE	6-3	304	2	Iowa	FA-26	FA-GB-21
57	Jonathan, Kingsley	DL	6-4	260	3	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-Buf-22
55	McGregor, Braiden	DE	6-6	267	2	Michigan	FA-24	FA-NYJ-24
93	Onyemata, David	DL	6-4	310	10	Manitoba	FA-Atl-26	D4-NO-16
98	Page, Payton	DL	6-3	300	1	Clemson	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
97	Phillips, Harrison	DL	6-3	307	8	Stanford	T-Min-25	D3-Buf-18
58	Smith, Mazi	DL	6-3	337	3	Michigan	T-Dal-25	D1-Dal-23
99	Sweat, T'Vondre	NT	6-4	366	2	Texas	T-Ten-26	D2-Ten-24
95	Watts, Eric	DL	6-5	277	2	UConn	FA-24	FA-NYJ-24

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Davis, Demario	LB	6-2	248	14	Arkansas State	FA-NO-26	D3-NYJ-12
52	Enagbare, Kingsley	LB	6-4	258	4	South Carolina	FA-GB-26	D5-GB-22
45	King, Kobe	LB	6-1	236	1	Penn State	W-Min-25	D6-Min-25
51	Mauigoa, Kiko	LB	6-2	233	1	Miami (Fla.)	D5a-25	D5a-NYJ-25
41	McCrary-Ball, Marcelino	LB	6-0	214	2	Indiana	FA-23	FA-SF-22
9	McDonald IV, Will	LB	6-4	245	3	Iowa State	D1-23	D1-NYJ-23
46	Ossai, Joseph	LB	6-4	263	5	Texas	FA-Cin-26	D3-Cin-21
44	Sherwood, Jamien	LB	6-2	216	5	Auburn	D5a-21	D5a-NYJ-21
43	Walker, Mykal	LB	6-3	232	6	Fresno State	FA-25	D4-Atl-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6	Belton, Dane	S	6-1	190	4	Iowa	FA-NYG-26	D4b-NYG-22
30	Brown, Tre	DB	5-10	190	5	Oklahoma	FA-25	D4-Sea-21
2	Brownlee Jr., Jarvis	CB	5-10	194	2	Louisville	T-Ten-25	D5-Ten-24
8	Cisco, Andre	S	6-0	210	5	Syracuse	FA-Jac-25	D3-Jac-21
35	Clark, Dean	S	6-0	208	1	Fresno State	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
33	Clark, Jordan	CB	5-9	184	1	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25
29	Fitzpatrick, Minkah	S	6-1	207	8	Alabama	T-Mia-26	D1-Mia-18
25	Monroe, Jarius	S	6-2	205	1	Tulane	FA-24	FA-NYJ-24
27	Moore, Malachi	S	5-11	196	1	Alabama	D4b-25	D4b-NYJ-25
22	Smith, Keidron	DB	6-2	210	2	Kentucky	PS-Den-25	FA-Mia-23
21	Stephens, Brandon	CB	6-1	215	5	SMU	FA-Bal-25	D3b-Bal-21
37	Stiggers, Qwan'tez	CB	6-0	197	2	None	D5c-24	D5c-NYJ-24
1	Thomas, Azareye'h	CB	6-1	197	1	Florida State	D3-25	D3-NYJ-25
39	Womack III, Samuel	CB	5-10	189	4	Toledo	FA-25	D5-SF-22
26	Wright, Nahshon	CB	6-4	199	4	Oregon State	FA-Chi-26	D3c-Dal-21

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42	Hennessy, Thomas	LS	6-2	246	9	Duke	T-Ind-17	FA-Ind-17
17	Krieg, Lenny	K	6-2	214	1	None	FA-26	FA-Atl-25
14	McNamara, Austin	P	6-4	210	1	Texas Tech	FA-25	FA-Cin-24
36	York, Cade	K	6-1	198	2	LSU	FA-26	D4-Cle-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Garrett Wilson	18	Isaiah Williams
WR	15	Adonai Mitchell	82	Arian Smith
WR	83	Omar Cooper Jr. (R)	19	Irvin Charles
LT	74	Olu Fashanu	61	Max Mitchell
LG	64	Dylan Parham	65	Xavier Newman
C	71	Josh Myers	50	Liam Fornadel
RG	66	Joe Tippmann	77	Marquis Hayes
RT	70	Armand Membou	79	Chukwuma Okorafor
TE	16	Kenyon Sadiq (R)	85	Mason Taylor
QB	7	Geno Smith	10	Cade Klubnik (R)
RB	20	Breece Hall	32	Isaiah Davis

DEFENSE

DE	97	Harrison Phillips	91	Jowon Briggs
DT	99	T'Vondre Sweat	58	Mazi Smith
DE	93	David Onyemata	78	Darrell Jackson Jr. (R)
OLB	31	David Bailey (R)	46	Joseph Ossai
ILB	56	Demario Davis	43	Mykal Walker
ILB	44	Jamien Sherwood	51	Kiko Mauigoa
OLB	9	Will McDonald IV	52	Kingsley Enagbare
CB	23	D'Angelo Ponds (R)	1	Azareye'h Thomas
CB	21	Brandon Stephens	26	Nahshon Wright
SS	29	Minkah Fitzpatrick	6	Dane Belton
FS	8	Andre Cisco	27	Malachi Moore

SPECIALISTS

K	36	Cade York	KR	3	Kene Nwangwu
P	14	Austin McNamara	PR	18	Isaiah Williams

140.3 New York's 140.3 passing yards per game ranked dead last in the NFL, nearly 25 yards behind the Browns.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	David Bailey	OLB	6-3	251	Texas Tech
1	Kenyon Sadiq	TE	6-3	241	Oregon
1	Omar Cooper Jr.	WR	6-0	199	Indiana
2	D'Angelo Ponds	CB	5-8	182	Indiana
4	Darrell Jackson Jr.	DL	6-5	315	Florida State
4	Cade Klubnik	QB	6-2	207	Clemson
6	Anez Cooper	G	6-5	334	Miami (Fla.)
7	VJ Payne	S	6-3	206	Kansas State

The Jets went with David Bailey over Arvell Reese with the second overall pick, and it's hard to argue with the logic, considering Bailey's superior collegiate production. Now, they just have to hope he can stand up against the run in the NFL, where his not-so-massive size could be an issue. Kenyon Sadiq and Omar Cooper Jr. will both have an immediate impact as much-needed playmakers, with the Jets already building an offense for their next quarterback. D'Angelo Ponds is a tenacious cornerback and immediate starter who makes up for his undersized frame with intelligence and relentlessness that have drawn comparisons to his new head coach, Aaron Glenn. Cade Klubnik might have been a reach pick, but he should be Geno Smith's backup in 2026.

RAVENS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
SEPT. 20	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
SEPT. 27	VS. DALLAS (RIO)	4:25
OCT. 4	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	AT ATLANTA	8:20
OCT. 18	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
OCT. 25	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	AT BUFFALO	1:00
NOV. 5	**JACKSONVILLE**	**8:15**
NOV. 16	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**8:15**
NOV. 22	AT CAROLINA	1:00
NOV. 29	AT HOUSTON	1:00
DEC. 6	BYE	
DEC. 13	**TAMPA BAY**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	AT PITTSBURGH	1:00
DEC. 27	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
DEC. 31	AT CINCINNATI	8:15
TBD	**PITTSBURGH**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021		8
2022	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2023	AFC PLAYOFFS	13
2024	AFC PLAYOFFS	12
2025		8

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **JESSE MINTER**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **DECLAN DOYLE**
Defensive Coordinator: **ANTHONY WEAVER**
Special Teams Coordinator: **ANTHONY LEVINE SR.**
Quarterbacks: **ISRAEL WOOLFORK**
Running Backs: **EDDIE FAULKNER**
Wide Receivers: **KEARY COLBERT**
Tight Ends: **ZACK GROSSI**
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: **DWAYNE LEDFORD**
Pass Game Coordinator: **MARCUS BRADY**
Defensive Line: **LOU ESPOSITO**
Inside Linebackers: **TYLER SANTUCCI**
Outside Linebackers: **HARLAND BOWER**
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: **MIKE MICKENS**
Safeties: **PJ VOLKER**

The catchphrase around the Ravens this season is "fresh start." For the first time in 19 years, there's new leadership in Baltimore, with rookie head coach Jesse Minter taking over for ousted John Harbaugh. Led by inimitable quarterback Lamar Jackson on offense and Swiss-Army-knife safety Kyle Hamilton on defense, the Ravens again feature a balanced roster positioned to contend. Now it falls to Minter and a trio of new coordinators to move the Ravens past the late-season flameouts that have vexed Jackson throughout his career and ultimately cost Harbaugh his job.

OFFENSE

Already in his ninth season at age 29, Jackson is 76-31 as a regular-season starter. As long as the two-time MVP stays healthy, the Ravens should contend.

This year, Jackson will be working with his fourth different offensive coordinator, as Declan Doyle takes over after holding that job for one season with the Chicago Bears. This will be Doyle's first experience as an NFL play-caller, and the first few games might reveal how much he is influenced by two head coaches he worked under, the Denver Broncos' Sean Payton and Chicago's Ben Johnson.

Doyle inherits a potent run game led by Derrick Henry, who continues to scoff at those expecting him to slow down after 30. Jackson isn't running as often as he did earlier in his career, but he's still a highlight reel waiting to happen on every snap. Pro Bowl fullback Patrick Ricard left as a free agent, suggesting that the fullback position, a staple under Harbaugh, has fallen out of favor in Baltimore.

Wide receiver Zay Flowers definitely has not. Flowers had three times as many targets as any other Ravens wide receiver a year ago. The 5-foot-9 Flowers is a decisive route-runner with good hands, and he's a jitterbug after the catch. Rashod Bateman has yet to really deliver on his first-round draft status, but he remains a home-run threat. Third-year receiver Devontez Walker can stretch the field and could be primed for a big jump.

Signing a 30-something receiver has been as predictable in Baltimore as summertime crab feasts, and despite drafting several pass-catchers, the Ravens will probably add a veteran to the receiving corps.

Tight end Mark Andrews already owns nearly every Ravens receiving record, and the uber-competitive Andrews and Jackson have had an almost telepathic connection since they arrived as rookies together. Andrews also remains one of Jackson's most trusted third-down targets.

The Ravens' biggest question on offense is up front after Pro Bowl center Tyler Linderbaum left in free agency. Former Colt Danny Pinter, with seven starts at center over five seasons, might get the first chance to win the job. Left tackle Ronnie Stanley anchors the line, and the Ravens need the 32-year-old to hold up physically. The Ravens used their top draft pick on Olaivavega Ioane as a plug-and-play guard, and veteran John Simpson will likely man the other guard spot. Roger Rosengarten returns at right tackle. New offensive line coach Dwayne Ledford might have the most important job no one is talking about after this unit underperformed a year ago.

DEFENSE

After a blockbuster deal for All-Pro Maxx Crosby fell apart, the Ravens signed free agent Trey Hendrickson to bolster a pass rush that has been a consistent

LAMAR JACKSON
QUARTERBACK

concern in recent years. Former Ravens player and assistant coach Anthony Weaver returns as the new defensive coordinator, although Minter will handle the defensive play-calling, which he did with the Los Angeles Chargers.

Now in his fifth season, Hamilton is the undisputed leader of the defense. Already a three-time All-Pro, Hamilton might play deep safety on one play, fire off the edge as a slot blitzer on the next and line up at inside linebacker on the next. The cerebral Hamilton might be the most fundamentally sound tackler on the team, and he has a bigger impact playing near the line of scrimmage.

The Ravens are guardedly optimistic that Pro Bowl defensive lineman Nnamdi Madubuike will return after a neck injury early last season left his career in question. Madubuike can blow up the pocket from the interior, as he proved with 13 sacks in 2023. Travis Jones has developed into a top nose tackle, and venerable Calais Campbell has rejoined the team. Campbell might be on a snap count at age 40, but he can still make an impact and is a plus-plus locker room guy.

Hendrickson gives the Ravens a game-wrecker on the edge, something they sorely lacked in 2025. Second-year edge Mike Green is expected to take a big step, and 6-foot-6 Tavius Robinson is a physical presence and good edge-setter against the run. The Ravens hope that Adisa Isaac can finally help after two injury-ravaged seasons, and second-round pick Zion Young could factor in right away.

Roquan Smith again leads the inside linebackers, and Teddye Buchanan opened some eyes as a rookie. He tore an ACL in December, but the team hopes he'll be back for Week 1. Trenton Simpson remains in the mix, and the team will probably add another veteran who can play special teams.

Marlon Humphrey is back to lead the cornerback group in his 10th season, and he can play in the slot or outside. Nate Wiggins will patrol one side, and Chidobe Awuzie is back after proving to be one of general manager Eric DeCosta's better under-the-radar signings a year ago. DeCosta has long echoed his former boss Ozzie Newsome's mantra that "you can never have too many corners," so the Ravens will probably add at least one veteran.

With Hamilton floating all over the field, 2025 top draft pick Malaki Starks and veteran free-agent addition Jaylinn Hawkins, who had four interceptions for the New England Patriots a year ago, profile as the more traditional safeties. Expect to see all three safeties on the field a lot.

SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Tyler Loop has had all summer to think about his shanked 44-yarder on the final play of the regular season that cost the Ravens a playoff spot. Kicking coach Randy Brown, who was instrumental in making Loop the first kicker ever drafted by the Ravens, remains on staff. So the job should still be Loop's, but he will face plenty of scrutiny. His first potential game-winner will be a huge test.

The Ravens drafted Michigan State punter Ryan Eckley as the presumptive replacement for free-agent departure Jordan Stout.

The Ravens like running backs to handle kickoff returns in the new format, so No. 3 back Rasheen Ali might get the first chance after having that job at times last season. Second-year receiver LaJohntay Wester has some pop as a punt returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

For an organization that touts tradition and values continuity, this offseason was a jolt. The Ravens have new coaches, new uniforms (sort of) and a new mentality as they enter a new era. Minter worked in Baltimore before, and team officials view him as the perfect link from the past to the future. He inherits a roster and an infrastructure that any new coach would appreciate. An AFC North title and deep playoff run remain realistic expectations. But Minter also inherits this organization's postseason ghosts. The clock is ticking for Jackson, who will continue to be dogged by the narrative of playoff shortcomings until he writes a different story. Now it's up to Minter to help him do just that.

PETER CASEY-IMAGN IMAGES

2025 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 7	at Buffalo	L	40-41
Sept. 14	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**41-17**
Sept. 22	Detroit	L	30-38
Sept. 28	at Kansas City	L	20-37
Oct. 5	Houston	L	10-44
Oct. 12	L.A. Rams	L	3-17
Oct. 26	**CHICAGO**	**W**	**30-16**
Oct. 30	**AT MIAMI**	**W**	**28-6**
Nov. 9	**AT MINNESOTA**	**W**	**27-19**
Nov. 16	**AT CLEVELAND**	**W**	**23-16**
Nov. 23	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**23-10**
Nov. 27	Cincinnati	L	14-32
Dec. 7	Pittsburgh	L	22-27
Dec. 14	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**24-0**
Dec. 21	New England	L	24-28
Dec. 27	**AT GREEN BAY**	**W**	**41-24**
Jan. 4	at Pittsburgh	L	24-26

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	332.2	16	7
RUSHING	156.6	2	2
PASSING	175.6	27	12
SCORING	24.9	11	5
THIRD DOWN %	40.9	13	7
POINTS/PLAY	0.435	6	3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	354.5	24	13
RUSHING	106.6	10	8
PASSING	247.9	T30	T15
SCORING	23.4	18	10
INTERCEPTIONS	11	T16	T8
SACKS	30	T28	15
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.365	14	8
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-3	T19	T9

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
LAMAR JACKSON	302	192	2,549	21	7
TYLER HUNTLEY	67	52	426	2	0
COOPER RUSH	52	34	303	0	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
DERRICK HENRY	307	1,595	5.2	16
LAMAR JACKSON	67	349	5.2	2
KEATON MITCHELL	59	341	5.8	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
ZAY FLOWERS	86	1,211	14.1	5
MARK ANDREWS	48	422	8.8	5
ISAIAH LIKELY	27	307	11.4	1
DEANDRE HOPKINS	22	330	15.0	2
JUSTICE HILL	21	169	8.0	1

KICKING: Tyler Loop, 30-34 FGs, 44-46 PATs, 134 points
TACKLES: Roquan Smith, 130; Kyle Hamilton, 105
SACKS: Travis Jones, 5.0; Tavius Robinson, 4.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Marlon Humphrey, 4; Nate Wiggins, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

YOUNG GUN At 30, Declan Doyle is the youngest offensive coordinator in the league and only 10 months older than quarterback Lamar Jackson. Doyle says his age will help him connect with Ravens players.

RUNNING FROM FATHER TIME **Derrick Henry** and Tiki Barber are the only running backs in NFL history to rush for at least 1,595 yards in back-to-back seasons after turning 30. Henry ran for 1,921 yards in 2024 and 1,595 last season, and he is hoping to become only the third running back ever to record three straight 1,000-yard seasons after turning 30. The other two are both in the Hall of Fame: Walter Payton and Emmitt Smith.

TOUCHDOWN 'TEZ Wide receiver Devontez Walker knows how to find the end zone. Walker has seven career receptions — four of them for touchdowns.

DIFFERENT KIND OF BIG PLAY Tight end Mark Andrews made one of the biggest plays of his life on an airplane two years ago. Andrews was flying from Baltimore to his hometown of Phoenix when a passenger had a medical emergency. As a doctor on board helped the passenger, Andrews, a type-1 diabetic, speculated that low blood sugar could be an issue. Andrews offered his diabetic testing kit and showed how to administer a finger-prick test to check blood-sugar levels. The passenger was stabilized and landed in Phoenix without incident.

FAMILY TIES The Ravens' rookie class has a couple of notable connections to the team's past. One of wide receiver Ja'Kobi Lane's coaches in high school was Ravens Ring of Honor tight end Todd Heap. Heap's son was Lane's high school quarterback. The Ravens also signed undrafted rookie safety Lardarius Webb Jr., whose father played for the Ravens from 2009-17.

SCOUTING THE RAVENS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BALTIMORE

"A watershed change in Baltimore with the exit of John Harbaugh, a Super Bowl-winning coach, and the entrance of Jesse Minter as a first-timer with new ideas and energy. Minter has a lot of upside as a coach and is really smart. … It's time for Eric DeCosta to pay Lamar Jackson again, and this deal probably should have already happened. Negotiating with no agent in place is always a challenge. … They got the best offensive linemen in the draft: Olaivavega Ioane. And the Ravens really need to shore up the interior after losing center Tyler Linderbaum to Las Vegas. … A healthy Zay Flowers is tough to stop. … Ronnie Stanley just keeps going. He's quietly one of the most effective left tackles and pass-blockers in the league. … Right tackle Roger Rosengarten is underrated. … Derrick Henry has been as advertised since he arrived. He's a powerhouse and their best running back since Jamal Lewis. … Still thinking they need more help at wide receiver. … The comeback of Nnamdi Madubuike from a serious neck injury could pay major dividends. … The Maxx Crosby thing was a disaster, but DeCosta didn't have much choice. The surgery was botched, and there were legitimate medical concerns. Trey Hendrickson isn't as dynamite as a rusher, but he has a nice repertoire of moves and is a safer acquisition. … Kyle Hamilton is the ultimate chess piece. … Marlon Humphrey is overrated and in decline. … Nate Wiggins was an ace selection for them. … Roquan Smith has lost some pop and speed over the years. … Malaki Starks started off slow, but he's catching on now."

MITCH STRINGER-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 RAVENS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Huntley, Tyler	QB	6-1	204	6	Utah	FA-25	FA-Bal-20
8 Jackson, Lamar	QB	6-2	205	8	Louisville	D1b-18	D1b-Bal-18
11 Thompson, Skylar	QB	6-2	210	4	Kansas State	FA-Pit-26	D7b-Mia-22

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Ali, Rasheen	RB	5-11	210	2	Marshall	D5-24	D5-Bal-24
22 Henry, Derrick	RB	6-3	252	10	Alabama	FA-Ten-24	D2c-Ten-16
43 Hill, Justice	RB	5-10	205	7	Oklahoma State	D4a-19	D4a-Bal-19
47 Scott, Lucas	FB	6-3	290	1	Army	FA-25	FA-Bal-25

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
89 Andrews, Mark	TE	6-5	250	8	Oklahoma	D3b-18	D3b-Bal-18
7 Bateman, Rashod	WR	6-1	193	5	Minnesota	D1a-21	D1a-Bal-21
4 Flowers, Zay	WR	5-9	183	3	Boston College	D1-23	D1-Bal-23
16 Guillory, Xavier	WR	6-2	200	1	Arizona State	FA-26	FA-Bal-25
86 Johnson, Cornelius	WR	6-3	212	1	Michigan	FA-25	D7-LAC-24
80 Smythe, Durham	TE	6-5	248	8	Notre Dame	FA-Chi-26	D4a-Mia-18
18 Wade, Dayton	WR	5-9	184	1	Ole Miss	FA-24	FA-Bal-24
81 Walker, Devontez	WR	6-1	198	2	North Carolina	D4a-24	D4a-Bal-24
10 Wester, LaJohntay	WR	5-9	170	1	Colorado	D6c-25	D6c-Bal-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
67 Bullock, Corey	G/C	6-3	320	1	Maryland	FA-24	FA-Bal-24
54 Gwyn, Jovaughn	C	6-2	310	2	South Carolina	FA-Atl-26	D7b-Atl-23
51 Jones Jr., Emery	G/T	6-5	320	1	LSU	D3-25	D3-Bal-25
78 Lichtenhan, Gerad	T	6-8	330	1	Oregon State	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
68 Penning, Jared	G	6-5	319	1	Northern Iowa	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
63 Pinter, Danny	C	6-4	301	6	Ball State	FA-Ind-26	D5-Ind-20
70 Rosengarten, Roger	T	6-5	316	2	Washington	D2-24	D2-Bal-24
74 Simpson, John	G	6-4	330	6	Clemson	FA-NYJ-26	D4-LV-20
79 Stanley, Ronnie	T	6-6	310	10	Notre Dame	D1-16	D1-Bal-16
76 Vinson, Carson	T	6-7	320	1	Alabama A&M	D5-25	D5-Bal-25
72 Vorhees, Andrew	G	6-6	320	2	USC	D7-23	D7-Bal-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
93 Campbell, Calais	DL	6-8	315	18	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Ari-26	D2-Ari-08
94 Jenkins, John	NT	6-3	360	13	Georgia	FA-25	D3-NO-13
98 Jones, Travis	DL	6-4	341	4	UConn	D3-22	D3-Bal-22
92 Madubuike, Nnamdi	DL	6-3	305	6	Texas A&M	D3a-20	D3a-Bal-20
97 Okoye, C.J.	DL	6-6	370	1	None	FA-25	FA-LAC-23
65 Olajiga, David	DL	6-3	310	1	Central Missouri	FA-25	FA-LAR-24
90 Peebles, Aeneas	DL	6-0	289	1	Virginia Tech	D6d-25	D6d-Bal-25
96 Washington Jr., B.	DL	6-2	315	6	Texas Tech	D5-20	D5-Bal-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
40 Buchanan, Teddye	ILB	6-2	240	1	Cal	D4-25	D4-Bal-25
15 Green, Mike	OLB	6-3	250	1	Marshall	D2-25	D2-Bal-25
91 Hendrickson, Trey	OLB	6-4	265	9	Florida Atlantic	FA-Cin-26	D3c-NO-17
49 Higgins IV, Jay	ILB	6-0	230	1	Iowa	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
50 Isaac, Adisa	OLB	6-4	253	2	Penn State	D3-24	D3-Bal-24
48 Jones Jr., Carl	LB	6-0	223	1	UCLA	W-Chi-25	FA-Chi-24
95 Robinson, Tavius	OLB	6-6	262	3	Ole Miss	D4-23	D4-Bal-23
56 Rucker, Kaimon	OLB	6-2	265	1	North Carolina	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
32 Simpson, Trenton	ILB	6-2	235	3	Clemson	D3-23	D3-Bal-23
0 Smith, Roquan	ILB	6-1	235	8	Georgia	T-Chi-22	D1-Chi-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	6-0	202	9	Colorado	FA-Ten-25	D2-Dal-17
14 Hamilton, Kyle	S	6-4	218	4	Notre Dame	D1a-22	D1a-Bal-22
21 Hawkins, Jaylinn	S	6-1	208	6	California	FA-NE-26	D4b-Atl-20
44 Humphrey, Marlon	CB	6-0	210	9	Alabama	D1-17	D1-Bal-17
39 Jackson, Keondre	S	6-2	215	1	Illinois State	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
31 Kone, Bilhal	CB	6-1	190	1	Western Michigan	D6a-25	D6a-Bal-25
37 Longerbeam, Robert	CB	5-11	174	1	Rutgers	D6e-25	D6e-Bal-25
38 Martin, Keyon	CB	5-9	170	1	Louisiana	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
25 Oruwariye, Amani	CB	6-2	205	6	Penn State	FA-25	D5-Det-19
28 Robinson, Marquise	CB	6-0	192	1	Arkansas	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
24 Starks, Malaki	S	6-1	203	1	Georgia	D1-25	D1-Bal-25
27 Tampa, T.J.	CB	6-1	199	2	Iowa State	D4b-24	D4b-Bal-24
26 Wallace, K'Von	S	5-11	205	6	Clemson	FA-26	D4-Phi-20
2 Wiggins, Nate	CB	6-1	182	2	Clemson	D1-24	D1-Bal-24

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
31 Elzinga, Luke	P	6-4	223	1	Oklahoma	FA-26	FA-Bal-26
33 Loop, Tyler	K	5-11	191	1	Arizona	D6b-25	D6b-Bal-25
46 Moore, Nick	LS	6-2	260	4	Georgia	FA-20	FA-NO-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	4	Zay Flowers	10	LaJohntay Wester
WR	7	Rashod Bateman	6	Ja'Kobi Lane (R)
WR	81	Devontez Walker	13	Elijah Sarratt (R)
LT	79	Ronnie Stanley	76	Carson Vinson
LG	71	Olaivavega Ioane (R)	72	Andrew Vorhees
C	63	Danny Pinter	67	Corey Bullock
RG	74	John Simpson	51	Emery Jones Jr.
RT	70	Roger Rosengarten	78	Gerad Lichtenhan
TE	89	Mark Andrews	88	Matt Hibner (R)
QB	8	Lamar Jackson	5	Tyler Huntley
RB	22	Derrick Henry	43	Justice Hill

DEFENSE

DE	96	Broderick Washington Jr.	93	Calais Campbell
NT	98	Travis Jones	94	John Jenkins
DT	92	Nnamdi Madubuike	90	Aeneas Peebles
OLB	91	Trey Hendrickson	9	Zion Young (R)
ILB	40	Teddye Buchanan	32	Trenton Simpson
ILB	0	Roquan Smith	49	Jay Higgins IV
OLB	15	Mike Green	95	Tavius Robinson
CB	2	Nate Wiggins	3	Chidobe Awuzie
CB	44	Marlon Humphrey	27	T.J. Tampa
SS	24	Malaki Starks	21	Jaylinn Hawkins
FS	14	Kyle Hamilton	39	Keondre Jackson

SPECIALISTS

K	33	Tyler Loop	KR	26	Rasheen Ali
P	30	Ryan Eckley (R)	PR	10	LaJohntay Wester

38.3% Lamar Jackson was blitzed on a league-high 38.3% of drop-backs, 3.3 percentage points higher than any other qualified quarterback.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Olaivavega Ioane	G	6-4	320	Penn State
2	Zion Young	Edge	6-5	262	Missouri
3	Ja'Kobi Lane	WR	6-4	200	USC
4	Elijah Sarratt	WR	6-2	210	Indiana
4	Matt Hibner	TE	6-4	251	SMU
5	Chandler Rivers	CB	5-9	185	Duke
5	Josh Cuevas	TE	6-3	245	Alabama
5	Adam Randall	RB	6-3	232	Clemson
6	Ryan Eckley	P	6-0	200	Michigan State
7	Rayshaun Benny	DT	6-3	298	Michigan
7	Evan Beerntsten	G	6-3	301	Northwestern

The interior offensive line was the Ravens' biggest area of need, and they snagged the best guard in the draft. Olaivavega Ioane is a stalwart pass protector and physical road-grader who should start right away. They also attacked other positions of need. Zion Young can add juice to the pass rush, and Ja'Kobi Lane and Elijah Sarratt bring size and upside to a relatively thin receiving corps. The Ravens snagged two tight ends to back up Mark Andrews, the fifth time they have taken two tight ends in the same draft. Keep an eye on Josh Cuevas as a sleeper, if only because every other time the Ravens have taken two tight ends, the second one has had a bigger impact. (Andrews in 2018 was taken two rounds after Hayden Hurst.)

BENGALS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

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2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**TAMPA BAY**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	AT HOUSTON	1:00
SEPT. 27	AT PITTSBURGH	1:00
OCT. 4	**JACKSONVILLE**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	AT MIAMI	1:00
OCT. 18	BYE	
OCT. 25	AT BALTIMORE	1:00
NOV. 1	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	**ATLANTA (MADRID)**	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 15	**PITTSBURGH**	**8:20**
NOV. 23	AT WASHINGTON	8:15
NOV. 29	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
DEC. 13	**KANSAS CITY**	**4:25**
DEC. 20	AT CAROLINA	1:00
TBD	AT INDIANAPOLIS	
DEC. 31	**BALTIMORE**	**8:15**
TBD	**CLEVELAND**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2022 AFC PLAYOFFS	12
2023	9
2024	9
2025	6

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **ZAC TAYLOR**
Record With Team: **52-63-1**
Career Record: **52-63-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **DAN PITCHER**
Defensive Coordinator: **AL GOLDEN**
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: **DARRIN SIMMONS**
Quarterbacks: **BRAD KRAGTHORPE**
Running Backs: **JUSTIN HILL**
Wide Receivers: **TROY WALTERS**
Tight Ends/Run Game Coordinator: **JAMES CASEY**
Offensive Line: **SCOTT PETERS**
Pass Game Coordinator: **JUSTIN RASCATI**
Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: **JERRY MONTGOMERY**
Linebackers: **MIKE HODGES**
Secondary/Cornerbacks: **CHARLES BURKS**
Secondary/Safeties: **JORDAN KOVACS**

If it weren't apparent enough following a third straight disappointing season, the Bengals provided even further clarity just days before the NFL Draft. They're going for it.

The Bengals' big-time trade for All-Pro defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence II was as uncharacteristic as it gets for the traditionally conservative franchise. It signaled Cincinnati's willingness to do everything to maximize its window to return to the Super Bowl. Already boasting one of the NFL's best offenses, the Bengals now have some nastiness at the center of their defense, renewing hope that this is the year they can put it all together as the kings of the AFC North.

OFFENSE

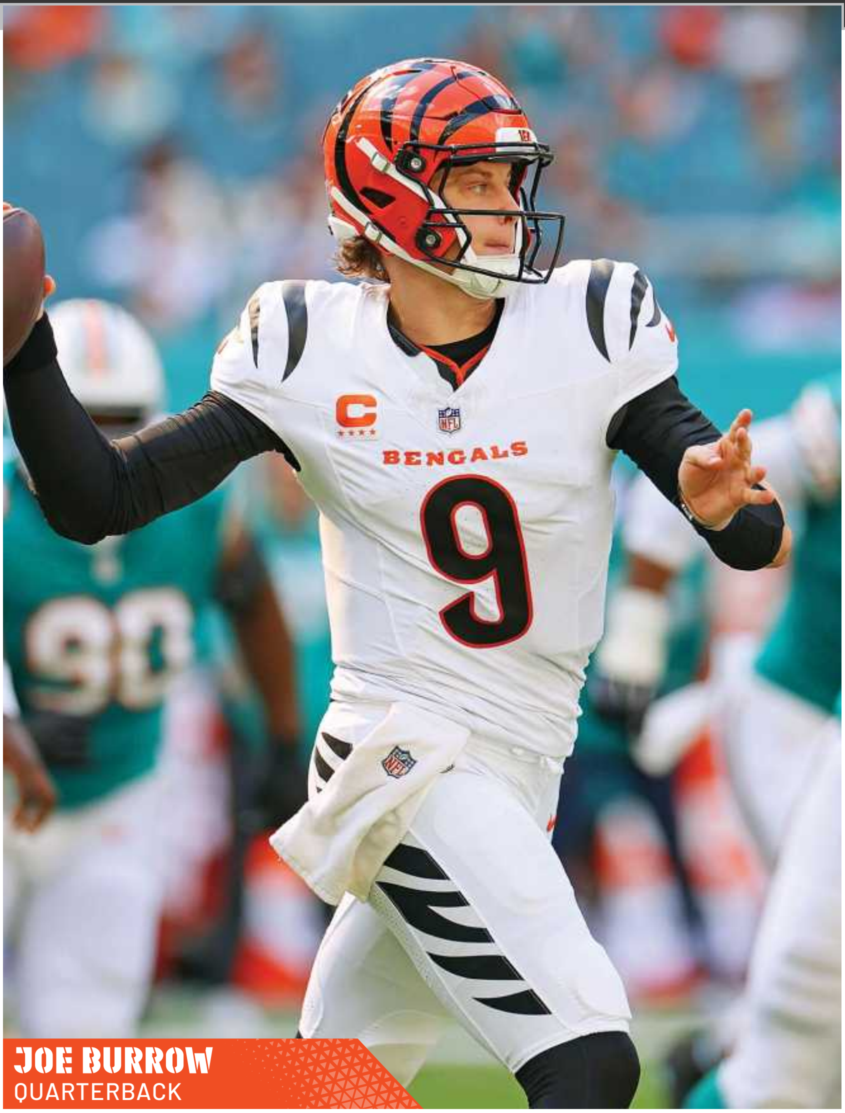
By the end of the 2025 campaign, Joe Burrow could no longer hide his frustration. The Pro Bowl QB, who turns 30 in December, wasn't having much fun near the tail end of another injury-affected, playoff-less season. He was so glum that some speculation emerged that he might have been looking for an exit from the franchise that made him the No. 1 overall pick in 2020. That's not happening anytime soon, and there's so much for Burrow to smile about with this Cincinnati offense, which should always be considered one of the NFL's best when Burrow is healthy. Very little has changed from last year as Burrow seeks to bounce back from a season that was marred by a toe injury that sidelined him for nine games. It marked Burrow's third season in six years that was heavily impacted by an injury, so the frustration he showed was understandable. It's a simple equation. When Burrow's healthy, Cincinnati wins far more than it loses.

Even without Burrow, offense was rarely the issue for Cincinnati last year thanks to the dynamic pass-catching duo of Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins and an underrated ground attack led by Chase Brown. Chase remains Burrow's go-to option in pretty much every situation, proving to be an equally dangerous threat on short, intermediate and deep passes. His 2025 campaign was a bit of a drop-off from his all-world 2024, but he still recorded 125 catches for 1,412 yards, giving him a whopping 352 receptions over a three-year stretch. Higgins, who is Burrow's favorite option on third downs and inside the red zone, was seemingly more affected by Burrow's absence but remains one of the NFL's best WR2s. Throw in the revival of tight end Mike Gesicki and Brown's increased role in the passing game — a career-best 69 receptions — and there's no shortage of firepower at Burrow's disposal.

Protecting Burrow has been a sensitive subject from the moment he arrived in Cincinnati, but the Bengals have stabilized things a bit on the offensive line. Minimal changes are expected for a group that is anchored in the middle by veteran center Ted Karras and flanked by tackles Orlando Brown Jr. and Amarius Mims. If there's some vulnerability, it's at guard, but the Bengals are more than equipped to keep Burrow upright and help move the chains for this high-octane attack.

DEFENSE

It's hard to pinpoint the low point for the Bengals defense in 2025. That there are numerous options to consider shows how bad it got for the Al Golden-led unit. The encouraging development Cincinnati can carry into 2026, though, is how it finished, as the defense held opponents to 24 points or fewer in five of the final six games. Throw in the addition of one of the NFL's best defensive



JOE BURROW
QUARTERBACK

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

tackles, and there's legitimate reason to believe the Bengals will be much better in Golden's second season at the helm of the defense.

Lawrence is truly different, and that's why the Bengals were willing to do the unexpected to acquire him. Never before had the Bengals traded a top-10 pick for a player, but Lawrence was clearly worth it to them. Largely overshadowed by his former team's offensive struggles, "Sexy Dexy" dominated the trenches for years for the Giants, and now he'll look to do the same for a Bengals defensive line that has needed a player of his caliber for years. Cincinnati will take all the pass rush it can get from Lawrence, whose 103 total pressures since 2022 are far and away the most among NFL defensive tackles. He'll play next to fellow newcomer Jonathan Allen, a 10-year veteran who is coming off a solid season in Minnesota.

It's the kind of talent injection Cincinnati needed in the wake of seeing Pro Bowl pass-rusher Trey Hendrickson depart in free agency to the Baltimore Ravens. The Bengals relied heavily on Hendrickson for sacks and pressure on the opposing quarterback, and it's not quite clear who will fill his void on the edge. Boye Mafe, signed in free agency after four seasons in Seattle, will get the first crack, but Cincinnati will need more than the two sacks he posted in 2025. The Bengals will also need more from last year's first-round pick Shemar Stewart, who never really got going after a lengthy contract holdout. Perhaps his former Texas A&M teammate, second-round selection Cashius Howell, can bring it out of him and help elevate the Bengals' pass rush. Howell will also get an opportunity to make an impact.

The biggest thing Cincinnati's linebackers and defensive backs can do to bounce back from a woeful 2025 is tackle better. No team in the league had more missed tackles than Cincinnati, and there's hope that new safeties Bryan Cook, a sure tackler during his four seasons in Kansas City, and Kyle Dugger, who played for Pittsburgh and New England last season, can help fortify the back end of the unit. The middle of the field is probably the biggest concern, as the Bengals will rely heavily on two second-year players, Barrett Carter and Demetrius Knight Jr. Many expected Cincinnati to add to this unit in the draft, but it opted to utilize its resources elsewhere, putting even more pressure on Carter and Knight to elevate their respective performances.

The Bengals added some major length to the cornerbacks room with the third-round selection of 6-foot-4 Tacario Davis, but they'll rely on two homegrown players, Dax Hill and DJ Turner II, to play the majority of snaps.

SPECIALISTS

Cincinnati will trot out the same kicker-punter battery for the third straight season with placekicker Evan McPherson and punter Ryan Rehkow. McPherson bounced back a bit in 2025 after a disappointing 2024, but he showed some inconsistency on extra points, missing three of his 44 attempts to go along with three misses (all from 50-plus yards) on his 25 field-goal attempts. Rehkow can absolutely boom it, as he was one of only five punters to average more than 50 yards in 2025. Charlie Jones, entering his fourth season, is a home-run threat on punts and kickoffs. He's notched a return touchdown in each of his first three seasons and will look to add another in his contract year.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Every other AFC North team turned over its coaching staff with the exception of the Bengals, who also happen to boast the division's longest playoff drought. Stability, mixed with some better health luck at quarterback and a just-good-enough defense, could propel Cincinnati back to the postseason and fulfill the high expectations Burrow and Co. carry in 2026.

2025 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept. 7	**AT CLEVELAND**	**W**	**17-16**
Sept. 14	**JACKSONVILLE**	**W**	**31-27**
Sept. 21	at Minnesota	L	10-48
Sept. 29	at Denver	L	3-28
Oct. 5	Detroit	L	24-37
Oct. 12	at Green Bay	L	18-27
Oct. 16	**PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**33-31**
Oct. 26	N.Y. Jets	L	38-39
Nov. 2	Chicago	L	42-47
Nov. 16	at Pittsburgh	L	12-34
Nov. 23	New England	L	20-26
Nov. 27	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**32-14**
Dec. 7	at Buffalo	L	34-39
Dec. 14	Baltimore	L	0-24
Dec. 21	**AT MIAMI**	**W**	**45-21**
Dec. 28	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**37-14**
Jan. 4	Cleveland	L	18-20

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	329.2	17	8
RUSHING	93.6	29	14
PASSING	235.6	6	2
SCORING	24.4	12	6
THIRD DOWN %	43.4	5	3
POINTS/PLAY	0.392	10	6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	380.9	31	16
RUSHING	147.1	32	16
PASSING	233.8	26	13
SCORING	28.9	30	15
INTERCEPTIONS	13	T11	T6
SACKS	35	T22	T11
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.469	30	15
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-3	T19	8

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JOE BURROW	259	173	1,809	17	5
JOE FLACCO	256	158	1,664	13	4
JAKE BROWNING	125	81	771	6	8

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
CHASE BROWN	232	1,019	4.4	6
SAMAJE PERINE	84	382	4.5	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
JA'MARR CHASE	125	1,412	11.3	8
CHASE BROWN	69	437	6.3	5
TEE HIGGINS	59	846	14.3	11
NOAH FANT	34	288	8.5	3
ANDREI IOSIVAS	33	435	13.2	2

KICKING: Evan McPherson, 25-28 FGs, 41-44 PATs, 116 points; **TACKLES:** Jordan Battle, 125; Demetrius Knight Jr., 106, Barrett Carter, 106; **SACKS:** Myles Murphy, 5.5; Joseph Ossai, 5.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Jordan Battle, 4; 3 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

A NEW 97 **Dexter Lawrence II** didn't need to wait long to get what he wanted after landing in Cincinnati. On top of the trade he requested from the New York Giants that landed him with the Bengals, Lawrence wanted to maintain some consistency in his life, namely when it came to his jersey number — 97. It was officially taken when he landed in Cincinnati less than a week before the draft, but it quickly became his when Shemar Stewart, last year's first-round pick, swapped to No. 94. It was unclear if Lawrence needed to compensate Stewart for the exchange, but let's be honest — he can afford it after netting a reported three-year extension bringing his contract value to $70 million.

INSIDE THE DEAL To say the trade for Lawrence was out of character for the Bengals would be a gross understatement. Before parting with the No. 10 overall pick to acquire Lawrence, the typically conservative Bengals hadn't ever traded a top-10 pick for another player. Lawrence, of course, isn't just another player, and it appears that the Bengals surmised that there wasn't anyone they'd regret missing with the No. 10 selection if they'd opted to hold pat. According to Albert Breer of *Sports Illustrated*, the Bengals determined that they would likely be selecting a player they graded as a mid- to late-first-round pick. "I know they gave up a lot for me, and I appreciate that," Lawrence said. "I don't take that for granted. I have a fire in me."

WELCOME TO THE (IMPROVED) JUNGLE Paycor Stadium turns 26 years young this season, and it will continue to evolve as the Bengals work to implement $470 million in upgrades over the next few years. On tap this year are renovations to multiple club lounges and all of the building's suites. Additionally, every bathroom will be "modernized" with updated walls, floors, ceilings and lighting.

SCOUTING THE BENGALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CINCINNATI

"There aren't a lot of better receivers than Ja'Marr Chase. He does it all. This is a future Hall of Fame selection. … Keeping Tee Higgins was an intelligent move. And it kept Joe Burrow happy. A lot of the offseason moves were built around keeping their star quarterback in line. Burrow's body language last season was impossible to mistake. As a quarterback, his accuracy is uncanny. … The growth of Chase Brown has been on full display. … Orlando Brown Jr. has matured a lot and become a solid left tackle. … Amarius Mims is a massive right tackle. … Not wowed by their tight end tandem of Drew Sample and Mike Gesicki. … Ted Karras always answers the bell. … The addition of Dexter Lawrence II in the middle of the defense gives them a mobile anchor to make the 4-3 defense pop. … Having Jonathan Allen playing next to Lawrence is a formidable duo. … Dax Hill can play corner or safety equally well. … DJ Turner II has 4.3 speed and has made real strides as a cover cornerback on the right side. … Demetrius Knight Jr. and Barrett Carter have stabilized the linebacker position. … Myles Murphy needs to step up this year. … Boye Mafe's production hasn't matched his talent. He needs to do more. … Bryan Cook is the real deal at free safety. … Shemar Stewart's holdout affected his rookie season. That contract dispute made no sense at all. The Brown family needs to avoid these disputes. … Not seeing a long future for Zac Taylor in Cincy if they don't get to the playoffs and make a run."

JULIAN LESHAY GUADALUPE/NORTHJER

2026 BENGALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Burrow, Joe	QB	6-4	215	6	LSU	D1-20	D1-Cin-20
4 Clifford, Sean	QB	6-2	212	2	Penn State	FA-25	D5-GB-23
16 Flacco, Joe	QB	6-6	245	18	Delaware	T-Cle-25	D1-Bal-08
11 Johnson, Josh	QB	6-3	214	16	San Diego	FA-Was-26	D5-TB-08

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Brightwell, Gary	RB	6-1	218	4	Arizona	FA-24	D6-NYG-21
25 Brooks, Tahj	RB	5-9	220	1	Texas Tech	D6-25	D6-Cin-25
30 Brown, Chase	RB	5-10	210	3	Illinois	D5-23	D5-Cin-23
36 Milton, Kendall	RB	6-1	230	1	Georgia	FA-24	FA-Phi-24
34 Perine, Samaje	RB	5-11	240	9	Oklahoma	FA-KC-25	D4-Was-17

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
83 All Jr., Erick	TE	6-5	255	2	Iowa	D4-24	D4-Cin-24
1 Chase, Ja'Marr	WR	6-0	205	5	LSU	D1-21	D1-Cin-21
88 Gesicki, Mike	TE	6-6	245	8	Penn State	FA-NE-24	D2-Mia-18
85 Grandy, Cam	TE	6-5	253	2	Illinois State	FA-24	FA-Cin-24
5 Higgins, Tee	WR	6-4	220	6	Clemson	D2-20	D2-Cin-20
87 Hudson, Tanner	TE	6-5	241	6	Southern Arkansas	FA-22	FA-TB-18
80 Iosivas, Andrei	WR	6-3	210	3	Princeton	D6a-23	D6a-Cin-23
18 Johnson, Xavier	WR	6-1	210	1	Ohio State	FA-25	FA-Buf-24
15 Jones, Charlie	WR	6-0	190	3	Purdue	D4-23	D4-Cin-23
81 Meyers, Dohnte	WR	5-11	186	1	Delta State	FA-26	FA-Cin-26
14 Moore, Jordan	WR	6-0	191	1	Duke	FA-25	FA-Cin-25
19 Pryor, Kendric	WR	5-11	189	2	Wisconsin	FA-23	FA-Cin-22
89 Sample, Drew	TE	6-5	260	7	Washington	D2-19	D2-Cin-19
82 Tinsley, Mitch	WR	6-1	205	2	Penn State	FA-25	FA-Was-23
12 Williams, Ke'Shawn	WR	5-9	189	1	Indiana	W-Pit-25	FA-Pit-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
69 Bayer, Jacob	C	6-3	310	1	Arkansas State	FA-25	FA-Buf-25
75 Brown Jr., Orlando	T	6-8	350	8	Oklahoma	FA-KC-23	D3a-Bal-18
79 Coker, Andrew	T	6-7	315	1	TCU	FA-24	FA-LV-24
63 Fairchild, Dylan	G	6-5	318	1	Georgia	D3-25	D3-Cin-25
61 Ford, Cody	T	6-3	345	7	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-23	D2-Buf-19
73 Foster, Javon	T	6-5	319	2	Missouri	FA-25	D4-Jac-24
64 Karras, Ted	C	6-4	310	10	Illinois	FA-NE-22	D6c-NE-16
60 Kirkland, Jaxson	G	6-7	325	2	Washington	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
71 Mims, Amarius	T	6-8	350	2	Georgia	D1-24	D1-Cin-24
66 Risner, Dalton	G	6-5	312	7	Kansas State	FA-25	D2a-Den-19
74 Rivers, Jalen	G	6-6	319	1	Miami (Fla.)	D5-25	D5-Cin-25

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
93 Allen, Jonathan	DL	6-3	300	9	Alabama	FA-Min-26	D1-Was-17
95 Cross III, Howard	DT	6-1	285	1	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-Cin-25
51 Foskey, Isaiah	DE	6-5	280	3	Notre Dame	FA-25	D2-NO-23
92 Hill, B.J.	DT	6-3	311	8	NC State	T-NYG-21	D3-NYG-18
91 Jackson, McKinley	DT	6-2	330	2	Texas A&M	D3b-24	D3b-Cin-24
68 Jefferson, Jordan	DT	6-4	317	2	LSU	W-SF-25	D4-Jac-24
90 Jenkins Jr., Kris	DT	6-3	310	2	Michigan	D2-24	D2-Cin-24
52 Johnson, Cedric	DE	6-3	264	2	Ole Miss	D6b-24	D6b-Cin-24
97 Lawrence II, Dexter	DT	6-4	340	7	Clemson	T-NYG-26	D1-NYG-19
53 Mafe, Boye	DE	6-4	261	4	Minnesota	FA-Sea-26	D2a-Sea-22
99 Murphy, Myles	DE	6-5	275	3	Clemson	D1-23	D1-Cin-23
98 Slaton Jr., T.J.	DT	6-5	340	5	Florida	FA-GB-25	D5a-GB-21
94 Stewart, Shemar	DE	6-5	267	1	Texas A&M	D1-25	D1-Cin-25

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45 Anderson, Liam	LB	6-3	230	1	Holy Cross	FA-25	FA-Ind-23
42 Burks, Oren	LB	6-3	233	8	Vanderbilt	FA-Phi-25	D3-GB-18
49 Carter, Barrett	LB	6-0	231	1	Clemson	D4-25	D4-Cin-25
43 Giles-Harris, Joe	LB	6-2	234	2	Duke	FA-25	FA-Jac-19
50 Heyward, Shaka	LB	6-3	238	2	Duke	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
44 Knight Jr., Demetrius	LB	6-2	240	1	South Carolina	D2-25	D2-Cin-25
56 Powell-Ryland, A.	LB	6-3	252	1	Virginia Tech	FA-25	D6-Phi-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33 Anthony, Daijahn	S	6-0	200	2	Ole Miss	D7a-24	D7a-Cin-24
27 Battle, Jordan	S	6-1	215	3	Alabama	D3-23	D3-Cin-23
6 Cook, Bryan	S	6-1	206	4	Cincinnati	FA-KC-26	D2b-KC-22
35 Davis, Jalen	CB	5-10	186	5	Utah State	FA-20	FA-Mia-18
29 Dugger, Kyle	S	6-1	216	6	Lenoir-Rhyne	FA-Pit-26	D2a-NE-20
23 Hill, Dax	CB	6-0	195	4	Michigan	D1-22	D1-Cin-22
38 Ivey, DJ	CB	6-1	192	3	Miami (Fla.)	D7-23	D7-Cin-23
37 Jules, PJ	S	6-0	203	1	Southern Illinois	FA-24	FA-Cin-24
40 Kimber, Jalen	CB	6-0	190	1	Penn State	FA-25	FA-Ten-25
21 Lux, Bralyn	CB	5-10	180	1	Texas Tech	FA-25	FA-Cin-25
28 Newton, Josh	CB	5-11	190	2	TCU	D5-24	D5-Cin-24
26 Taylor, Ja'Sir	CB	5-10	185	4	Wake Forest	FA-NYJ-26	D6b-LAC-22
0 Turner II, DJ	CB	5-11	185	3	Michigan	D2-23	D2-Cin-23
39 Yeast, Russ	S	5-10	195	3	Kansas State	FA-25	D7-LAR-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 McPherson, Evan	K	5-11	185	5	Florida	D5-21	D5-Cin-21
8 Rehkow, Ryan	P	6-4	235	2	BYU	FA-24	FA-KC-24
46 Wagner, William	LS	6-2	240	1	Michigan	FA-25	FA-Cin-25

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Ja'Marr Chase	86	Colbie Young (R)
WR	5	Tee Higgins	82	Mitchell Tinsley
WR	80	Andrei Iosivas	15	Charlie Jones
LT	75	Orlando Brown Jr.	73	Javon Foster
LG	63	Dylan Fairchild	62	Brian Parker II (R)
C	64	Ted Karras	65	Connor Lew (R)
RG	66	Dalton Risner	74	Jalen Rivers
RT	71	Amarius Mims	61	Cody Ford
TE	88	Mike Gesicki	89	Drew Sample
QB	9	Joe Burrow	16	Joe Flacco
RB	30	Chase Brown	34	Samaje Perine

DEFENSE

DE	53	Boye Mafe	94	Shemar Stewart
DT	97	Dexter Lawrence II	98	T.J. Slaton Jr.
DT	93	Jonathan Allen	92	B.J. Hill
DE	99	Myles Murphy	55	Cashius Howell (R)
SLB	42	Oren Burks	45	Liam Anderson
MLB	49	Barrett Carter	43	Joe Giles-Harris
WLB	44	Demetrius Knight Jr.	50	Shaka Heyward
CB	23	Dax Hill	20	Tacario Davis (R)
CB	0	DJ Turner II	38	DJ Ivey
SS	27	Jordan Battle	29	Kyle Dugger
FS	6	Bryan Cook	37	PJ Jules

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Evan McPherson	KR	15	Charlie Jones
P	8	Ryan Rehkow	PR	15	Charlie Jones

57.7%

The Bengals ran between the tackles on a league-high 57.7% of their run plays.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	Cashius Howell	DE	6-3	255	Texas A&M
3	Tacario Davis	CB	6-4	194	Washington
4	Connor Lew	C	6-4	310	Auburn
4	Colbie Young	WR	6-4	218	Georgia
6	Brian Parker II	OT	6-5	310	Duke
7	Jack Endries	TE	6-5	245	Texas
7	Landon Robinson	DT	6-0	295	Navy

The Bengals sat out the first night because of their megadeal to acquire All-Pro DT Dexter Lawrence II, but they made the most of Day 2, continuing to upgrade their defense. Cashius Howell, who had 11.5 sacks in his final season with the Aggies, will have a big opportunity to contribute right away, as the Bengals look to replace Trey Hendrickson's production. Tacario Davis, a lengthy corner, could have a shot to start at nickel or spell the team's starters on the outside. Cincinnati's eyes were on the future on Day 3, particularly with the addition of Connor Lew. Lew will back up veteran Ted Karras, who is 33 and playing on the final year of his contract.

BROWNS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

4

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT JACKSONVILLE	1:00
SEPT. 20	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
SEPT. 27	**CAROLINA**	**1:00**
OCT. 1	**PITTSBURGH**	**8:15**
OCT. 11	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
OCT. 18	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
OCT. 25	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
NOV. 1	AT PITTSBURGH	1:00
NOV. 8	AT NEW ORLEANS	1:00
NOV. 15	**HOUSTON**	**1:00**
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 29	**LAS VEGAS**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	**ATLANTA**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
DEC. 27	AT BALTIMORE	1:00
JAN. 3	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
TBD	AT CINCINNATI	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	8
2022	7
2023 AFC PLAYOFFS	11
2024	3
2025	5

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **TODD MONKEN**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **TRAVIS SWITZER**
Defensive Coordinator: **MIKE RUTENBERG**
Special Teams Coordinator: **BYRON STORER**
Quarterbacks: **MIKE BAJAKIAN**
Running Backs: **DUCE STALEY**
Wide Receivers: **CHRISTIAN JONES**
Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends: **JEFF BLASKO**
Offensive Line: **GEORGE WARHOP**
Pass Game Coordinator: **EPHRAIM BANDA**
Pass Game Coordinator: **DANNY BREYER**
Defensive Line: **JACQUES CESAIRE**
Run Game Coordinator/Linebackers: **JASON TARVER**
Defensive Backs/Pass Game Specialist: **BRANDON LYNCH**

After another fourth-place finish and another offensive failure in 2025, the Cleveland Browns fired head coach Kevin Stefanski, although that move didn't stop the team's ongoing quarterback carousel or magically fix the lingering offensive line issues. The Browns hired a first-time NFL head coach in Todd Monken, who, like Stefanski, is an offensive coach who will call his own plays.

The Browns focused on remaking the offensive line in the offseason and then spent two of their first three draft picks on wide receivers. Quarterback Deshaun Watson is only on the roster because the Browns didn't have the salary cap space to cut him ahead of the final year of his contract, but Watson and second-year passer Shedeur Sanders will compete for the starting job.

The Browns are likely thinking about 2027 being the year they try to find their next answer at quarterback. But 2025 was so disappointing because the team wasted a really good defense, and most of that defense is back. All-Pro pass-rusher Myles Garrett is the headliner of the group, and both Garrett and cornerback Denzel Ward continue to rank among the league's best defenders.

With enough defensive talent to carry the team to some wins, Monken believes he can find a way to mix competent quarterback play with a strong run game and make the Browns at least competitive in 2026.

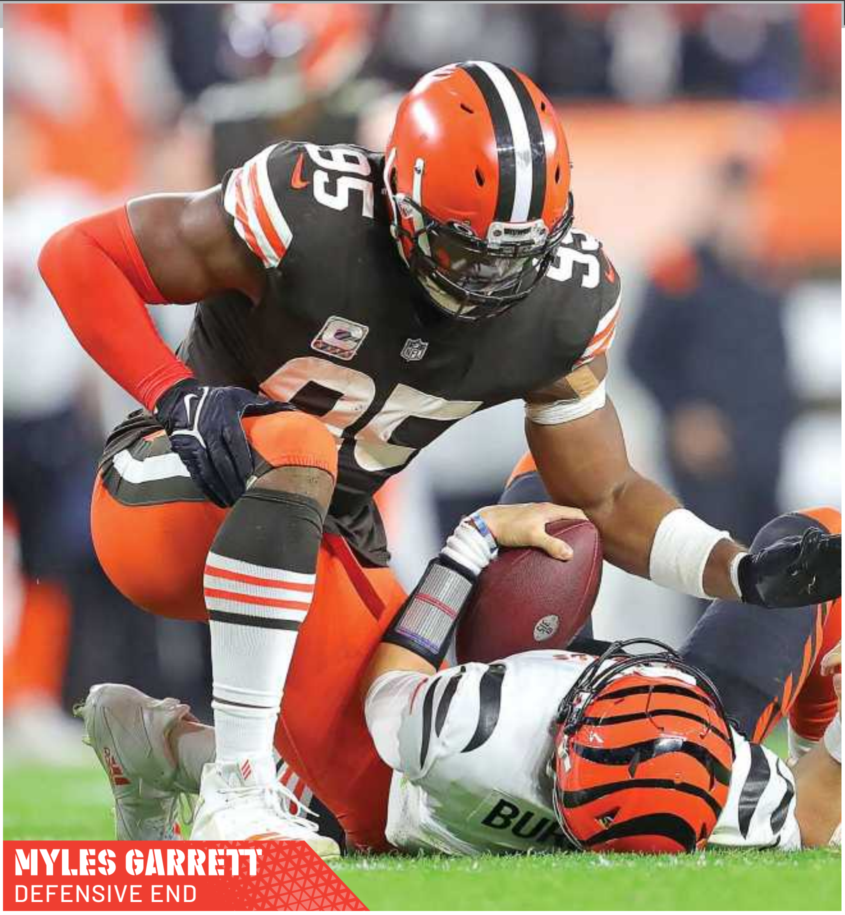
OFFENSE

Sanders showed some promise in starting the final seven games of his rookie season, but not enough to be handed the job. Watson missed all of 2025 with a twice-torn Achilles tendon. He's started only 19 games since the Browns traded three first-round picks to acquire him in March 2022. Watson was cleared to participate in the entire offseason program, and though his NFL future (if he has one) probably isn't with the Browns, Monken planned to let Watson and Sanders compete throughout the spring and early summer.

The Browns knew they needed to upgrade the line and pass-catching groups to support whoever plays quarterback, and the line was the focus. The Browns added veterans Tytus Howard, Elgton Jenkins and Zion Johnson to the line in March and then began their draft by selecting Spencer Fano at No. 9 overall. Fano will be the team's left tackle after playing right tackle over his final two college seasons. Johnson, the team's first free-agent signing of the offseason, is likely to play left guard and will help Fano develop and acclimate to the NFL game. The Browns also drafted tackle Austin Barber in the third round to provide depth and potentially compete for playing time at guard if the Browns need help there.

Two second-year players headline the skill-position groups. Tight end Harold Fannin Jr. was ahead of schedule as a rookie and has the size and run-after-catch ability to continue his ascension to stardom. Running back Quinshon Judkins' first season ended with a dislocated ankle and fractured fibula, but he is on track to be ready for the start of training camp. Judkins is by far the team's most talented runner and showed progress in 2025 after missing his first NFL training camp, so he looms as potentially Cleveland's most important non-quarterback offensive player.

Wide receiver Jerry Jeudy is back after a disappointing 2025, but the Browns believe they added some pop to the group via the draft with wide receivers KC Concepcion and Denzel Boston. Concepcion is a speed-first player who might



MYLES GARRETT
DEFENSIVE END

JEFF LANGE

eventually fit best in the slot but could line up all over the formation, while Boston is a true outside receiver whom the team views as a future red-zone weapon.

DEFENSE

Most of the defensive personnel returns, but defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz resigned after the Browns chose not to hire him for the head-coaching job. Mike Rutenberg takes over as defensive coordinator with most of Schwartz's position coaches still in place and Pro Bowl-caliber players at every level of the defense.

Garrett is almost certainly the NFL's best defensive player. In 2025, he turned a public trade demand into a rich new contract extension and then set the NFL's single-season sacks record with 23. What made that more impressive is that Garrett had only four sacks through six games and that the Cleveland defense continued to play at a high level despite the offense's continued struggles. Garrett also set the NFL record for most sacks (124.5) for a player before his 30th birthday, which he celebrated last December. Garrett is still in his prime and is still wrecking games, but there remains some uncertainty about his future given the state of the Browns' roster.

In the secondary, the Browns have proven players in Ward and safety Grant Delpit, who's headed to the final year of his contract. Cornerback Tyson Campbell played well after being acquired in a trade last October, and the team has high hopes for rookie safety Emmanuel McNeil-Warren. For all the uncertainty about the future and how the Browns might handle Garrett and Ward if the offense doesn't take a leap in 2026, linebacker Carson Schwesinger seems a near-certainty to become one of the leaders of the locker room and remain the defensive signal-caller. A second-round pick in 2025, Schwesinger became the easy choice as the Defensive Rookie of the Year. Schwesinger, a former walk-on at UCLA, is instinctive, rangy and durable.

After linebacker Devin Bush departed in free agency, the Browns added veteran Quincy Williams to pair with Schwesinger. Williams previously played under Rutenberg with the Jets, and the new linebacker and new coordinator stand out as two of the few fresh faces on a defense that's looking to maintain its level of play.

When the Cleveland defense is at its best, it's dominant up front. That's not just Garrett, who almost always commands extra attention from opposing linemen and play-callers. The Browns have heavily invested in defensive tackles and have two standouts there in veteran Maliek Collins and 2025 first-round pick Mason Graham. With Collins coming back from a significant quad injury, 2025 undrafted free agent Adin Huntington and 2026 free-agent pickup Kalia Davis could be asked to play more snaps early on.

SPECIALISTS

Outside of kicker Andre Szmyt's strong finish to the season, 2025 was a disappointing year across the board for the Browns' special teams. Punter Corey Bojorquez was busy — he led the NFL in punts for a second straight season — but the team again failed to find a consistent weapon in the return game, and the coverage units were subpar.

New special teams coach Byron Storer has Szmyt and Bojorquez back. The Browns will again be one of the league's youngest teams, but Storer should have a stronger overall roster from which he can choose his core special teams players. The Browns believe Szmyt improved over the course of his first NFL season and has a chance to become the team's long-term kicker.

Expect Concepcion, Dylan Sampson and Malachi Corley to be in the mix for roles in the return game.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Browns feel they addressed key areas on the offensive side and have built one of the NFL's best defenses. The 2025 draft class was strong, and if young players across the roster continue to develop, significant improvement in the overall product is possible. But with the lingering question at quarterback and not much depth anywhere, a playoff berth seems unlikely.

2025 RESULTS (5-12)

Sept. 7	Cincinnati	L	16-17
Sept. 14	at Baltimore	L	17-41
Sept. 21	**GREEN BAY**	**W**	**13-10**
Sept. 28	at Detroit	L	10-34
Oct. 5	Minnesota	L	17-21
Oct. 12	at Pittsburgh	L	9-23
Oct. 19	**MIAMI**	**W**	**31-6**
Oct. 26	at New England	L	13-32
Nov. 9	at N.Y. Jets	L	20-27
Nov. 16	Baltimore	L	16-23
Nov. 23	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**24-10**
Nov. 30	San Francisco	L	8-26
Dec. 7	Tennessee	L	29-31
Dec. 14	at Chicago	L	3-31
Dec. 21	Buffalo	L	20-23
Dec. 28	**PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**13-6**
Jan. 4	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**20-18**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	262.1	30	14
RUSHING	97.0	27	13
PASSING	165.1	31	15
SCORING	16.4	31	15
THIRD DOWN %	33.6	29	15
POINTS/PLAY	0.271	31	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	283.6	4	3
RUSHING	116.4	16	11
PASSING	167.2	3	2
SCORING	22.3	14	8
INTERCEPTIONS	11	T16	T8
SACKS	53	3	2
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.373	16	10
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-7	T27	T14

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
SHEDEUR SANDERS	212	120	1,400	7	10
DILLON GABRIEL	185	110	937	7	2
JOE FLACCO	160	93	815	2	6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
QUINSHON JUDKINS	230	827	3.6	7
DYLAN SAMPSON	65	175	2.7	0
SHEDEUR SANDERS	21	169	8.0	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
HAROLD FANNIN JR.	72	731	10.2	6
JERRY JEUDY	50	602	12.0	2
DAVID NJOKU	33	293	8.9	4
DYLAN SAMPSON	33	271	8.2	2

KICKING: Andre Szmyt, 24-27 FGs, 25-26 PATs, 97 points; **TACKLES:** Carson Schwesinger, 156; Devin Bush, 125; **SACKS:** Myles Garrett, 23.0; Maliek Collins, 6.5; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Devin Bush, 3; 2 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

LONG JOURNEY When the Browns selected Carson Schwesinger atop the second round in 2025, he was far from a household name. Schwesinger was a former walk-on who had been a one-year starter on a UCLA team that struggled, and most draft projections had the Browns using that pick on an offensive skill player. But it was the right pick, as Schwesinger thrived immediately and went on to become the Defensive Rookie of the Year.

ALL IN THE FAMILY The Browns traded down three spots in the first round in April but still were able to select Utah offensive tackle **Spencer Fano**, the player they'd identified as their top offensive lineman and top draft target all along. Following the conclusion of the draft, the Browns signed Logan Fano, Spencer's older brother and a defensive end at Utah.

MOVING FORWARD Browns first-round wide receiver **KC Concepcion** has dealt with a stutter throughout his life. Ahead of this spring's draft, Concepcion posted a letter to the 32 NFL general managers in *The Players Tribune* in which he was open about his struggles as a child and how he used football to overcome being mocked at school. Concepcion says he plans to work in northeast Ohio to support kids in similar situations and help them pursue their dreams.

FANO
55
CONCEPCION JR
17

KICKBACK In last year's season opener, the Browns lost a close game to the Bengals after kicker Andre Szmyt missed a PAT and a field goal in the second half of his first NFL game. The Browns stuck with Szmyt, who went on to finish 24-of-27 on field-goal attempts over the rest of the season and did not miss a kick in the season's final two months.

SCOUTING THE BROWNS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CLEVELAND

"It's time for the Browns to get a return on their $230 million investment in Deshaun Watson. Watson has the talent as a former Pro Bowl selection, but his off-field problems, now settled through the legal system, derailed his career. He's much better than Shedeur Sanders, but it doesn't take a genius to see that. … Quinshon Judkins is a real find at tailback. … Drafting Denzel Boston gives Cleveland a real big deep threat and contested-catch guy to work opposite Jerry Jeudy. … The return skills and YAC ability of KC Concepcion are special. … This was an inspired overhaul of the offensive line: trading for right tackle Tytus Howard, drafting left tackle Spencer Fano and signing free agents Zion Johnson and Elgton Jenkins. This should work. … Todd Monken is an old-school ball coach who gets the buy-in from his guys and is off to a good start this offseason. … Myles Garrett is flat-out unblockable. Good luck to the linemen tasked with slowing him down. … Mason Graham overcame a slow start and is hitting his stride now. … Maliek Collins' spin move is among the best in the league. … Quincy Williams gets the job done at linebacker. … Carson Schwesinger was an inspired choice last year that made the Browns defense better. … Grant Delpit is a rangy center fielder. … Denzel Ward doesn't get enough credit for his excellence as a corner. … Tyson Campbell doesn't make enough plays on the ball. … It's time for Mike Hall Jr. to make more plays."

KEN BLAZE-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 BROWNS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Gabriel, Dillon	QB	5-11	205	1	Oregon	D3b-25	D3b-Cle-25
2	Sanders, Shedeur	QB	6-2	212	1	Colorado	D5-25	D5-Cle-25
4	Watson, Deshaun	QB	6-3	223	9	Clemson	T-Hou-22	D1-Hou-17

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34	Burton, Michael	FB	5-11	242	11	Rutgers	FA-Den-26	D5-Det-15
10	Judkins, Quinshon	RB	6-0	221	1	Ohio State	D2b-25	D2b-Cle-25
23	Marshall, Ahmani	RB	6-1	225	1	Appalachian State	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
22	Sampson, Dylan	RB	5-8	200	1	Tennessee	D4-25	D4-Cle-25
35	Sanders, Raheim	RB	6-0	230	1	South Carolina	W-LAC-25	FA-LAC-25

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82	Bates, Brenden	TE	6-5	255	2	Kentucky	W-Hou-25	FA-Chi-24
0	Bond, Isaiah	WR	5-11	180	1	Texas	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
87	Cannella, Sal	TE	6-5	242	1	Auburn	FA-25	FA-Mia-21
83	Corley, Malachi	WR	5-11	215	2	WKU	FA-25	D3-NYJ-24
44	Fannin Jr., Harold	TE	6-4	241	1	Bowling Green	D3a-25	D3a-Cle-25
81	Floriea, Luke	WR	5-8	180	1	Kent State	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
3	Jeudy, Jerry	WR	6-1	195	6	Alabama	T-Den-24	D1-Den-20
84	Larvadain, Gage	WR	5-8	171	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
88	Prieskorn, Caden	TE	6-5	255	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Den-25
89	Stoll, Jack	TE	6-4	247	5	Nebraska	FA-NO-26	FA-Phi-21
80	Thrash, Jamari	WR	6-0	190	2	Louisville	D5-24	D5-Cle-24
19	Tillman, Cedric	WR	6-3	215	3	Tennessee	D3a-23	D3a-Cle-23
16	Wallace, Tylan	WR	5-11	200	5	Oklahoma State	FA-Bal-26	D4-Bal-21
86	Whiteheart, Blake	TE	6-4	250	3	Wake Forest	FA-24	FA-Ari-23
85	Wooden, Isaiah	WR	5-9	176	1	Southern Utah	FA-26	FA-Atl-24

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
63	Byers, Jeremiah	T	6-4	320	1	Florida State	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
67	Conley, Jack	T	6-7	333	1	Boston College	FA-25	FA-NE-25
53	Green, Kendrick	G	6-4	315	5	Illinois	FA-25	D3-Pit-21
71	Howard, Tytus	T/G	6-5	322	7	Alabama State	T-Hou-26	D1-Hou-19
74	Jenkins, Elgton	C/G	6-5	311	7	Mississippi State	FA-GB-26	D2-GB-19
78	Jenkins, Teven	G	6-6	321	5	Oklahoma State	FA-Chi-25	D2-Chi-21
77	Johnson, Zion	G	6-3	316	4	Boston College	FA-LAC-26	D1-LAC-22
79	Jones, Dawand	T	6-8	374	3	Ohio State	D4a-23	D4a-Cle-23
72	Leveston, KT	T	6-4	335	2	Kansas State	T-LAR-25	D7-LAR-24
69	Phillips, Tyre	T	6-5	330	5	Mississippi State	FA-25	D3d-Bal-20
56	Wypler, Luke	C	6-3	303	3	Ohio State	D6-23	D6-Cle-23
70	Zinter, Zak	G	6-6	310	2	Michigan	D3-24	D3-Cle-24

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62	Chatman, Elijah	DT	6-0	278	2	SMU	FA-NYG-26	FA-NYG-24
96	Collins, Maliek	DT	6-2	310	10	Nebraska	FA-SF-25	D3-Dal-16
93	Davis, Kalia	DT	6-2	310	4	UCF	FA-SF-26	D6b-SF-22
95	Garrett, Myles	DE	6-4	272	9	Texas A&M	D1a-17	D1a-Cle-17
94	Graham, Mason	DT	6-4	315	1	Michigan	D1-25	D1-Cle-25
51	Hall Jr., Mike	DT	6-3	300	2	Ohio State	D2-24	D2-Cle-24
98	Huntington, Adin	DE	6-1	281	1	Tulane	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
92	Kamara, Sam	DT	6-0	272	3	Stony Brook	FA-25	FA-Chi-21
57	McGuire, Isaiah	DE	6-4	268	3	Missouri	D4b-23	D4b-Cle-23
99	Okwara, Julian	DE	6-4	250	6	Notre Dame	FA-Ari-25	D3a-Det-20
91	Wright, Alex	DE	6-5	267	4	UAB	D3b-22	D3b-Cle-22

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42	Mascarenas-Arnold, Easton	LB	5-11	227	1	USC	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
6	Owusu-Koramoah, Jeremiah	LB	6-2	221	5	Notre Dame	D2-21	D2-Cle-21
59	Reid, Winston	LB	6-0	225	2	Weber State	FA-24	FA-Cle-24
49	Schwesinger, Carson	LB	6-3	242	1	UCLA	D2a-25	D2a-Cle-25
54	Ulofoshio, Edefuan	LB	6-1	240	2	Washington	FA-25	D5-Buf-24
40	Watson, Nathaniel	LB	6-0	233	2	Mississippi State	D6-24	D6-Cle-24
5	Williams, Quincy	LB	5-11	230	7	Murray State	FA-NYJ-26	D3-Jac-19

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11	Avery, Tre	CB	5-11	185	4	Rutgers	FA-25	FA-Ten-22
27	Bryant, Myles	CB	5-9	192	6	Washington	FA-Hou-26	FA-NE-20
7	Campbell, Tyson	CB	6-1	195	5	Georgia	T-Jac-25	D2-Jac-21
9	Delpit, Grant	S	6-3	208	6	LSU	D2-20	D2-Cle-20
41	Edmonds, Christopher	S	6-2	210	1	Arizona State	FA-25	FA-Cle-24
26	Harden, Myles	CB	5-11	195	2	South Dakota	D7a-24	D7a-Cle-24
33	Hickman, Ronnie	S	6-1	209	3	Ohio State	FA-23	FA-Cle-23
37	Jones, Dom	CB	6-2	192	1	Colorado State	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
31	McMillon, Donovan	S	6-2	203	1	Pitt	FA-25	FA-Cle-25
20	Ross, D'Angelo	CB	5-9	190	4	New Mexico	FA-25	FA-NE-19
24	Thomas, Daniel	S	5-10	215	6	Auburn	FA-Det-26	D5a-Jac-20
21	Ward, Denzel	CB	5-11	190	8	Ohio State	D1b-18	D1b-Cle-18

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13	Bojorquez, Corey	P	6-0	217	8	New Mexico	FA-GB-22	FA-NE-18
30	Constantinou, Nik	P	6-3	225	1	Texas A&M	FA-26	FA-Den-24
50	Sunahara, Rex	LS	6-6	242	2	West Virginia	FA-24	FA-Mia-20
25	Szmyt, Andre	K	6-0	200	1	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-Chi-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	3	Jerry Jeudy	0	Isaiah Bond
WR	17	KC Concepcion (R)	83	Malachi Corley
WR	12	Denzel Boston (R)	19	Cedric Tillman
LT	55	Spencer Fano (R)	58	Austin Barber (R)
LG	77	Zion Johnson	70	Zak Zinter
C	74	Elgton Jenkins	52	Parker Brailsford (R)
RG	78	Teven Jenkins	56	Luke Wypler
RT	71	Tytus Howard	79	Dawand Jones
TE	44	Harold Fannin Jr.	86	Blake Whiteheart
QB	4	Deshaun Watson	2	Shedeur Sanders
RB	10	Quinshon Judkins	22	Dylan Sampson

DEFENSE

DE	95	Myles Garrett	99	Julian Okwara
DT	94	Mason Graham	51	Mike Hall Jr.
DT	96	Maliek Collins	93	Kalia Davis
DE	91	Alex Wright	57	Isaiah McGuire
LB	49	Carson Schwesinger	42	Easton Mascarenas-Arnold
LB	5	Quincy Williams	40	Nathaniel Watson
LB	59	Winston Reid	10	Justin Jefferson (R)
CB	21	Denzel Ward	26	Myles Harden
CB	7	Tyson Campbell	20	D'Angelo Ross
S	9	Grant Delpit	24	Daniel Thomas
S	28	Em. McNeil-Warren (R)	33	Ronnie Hickman

SPECIALISTS

K	25	Andre Szmyt	KR	83	Malachi Corley
P	13	Corey Bojorquez	PR	17	KC Concepcion (R)

45.2% A league-high 45.2% of Quinshon Judkins' carries in 2025 came with eight or more defenders in the box per NFL Next Gen Stats.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Spencer Fano	OT	6-5	311	Utah
1	KC Concepcion	WR	5-11	196	Texas A&M
2	Denzel Boston	WR	6-3	212	Washington
2	Emmanuel McNeil-Warren	S	6-3	201	Toledo
3	Austin Barber	OT	6-6	318	Florida
5	Parker Brailsford	C	6-1	289	Alabama
5	Justin Jefferson	LB	6-0	223	Alabama
5	Joe Royer	TE	6-5	247	Cincinnati
6	Taylen Green	QB	6-5	227	Arkansas
7	Carsen Ryan	TE	6-3	255	BYU

The Browns doubled up at wide receiver and offensive tackle over the draft's first two days. They considered Denzel Boston a first-round prospect and strongly considered Emmanuel McNeil-Warren in the spot where they eventually drafted Boston, so the internal view on the second-round results is positive. KC Concepcion had some drop issues in college, but his explosiveness is welcome in Cleveland's evolving offense. Spencer Fano will take over at left tackle immediately after he spent his final two college seasons on the right side. The team views Fano as a high-upside, high-character player who can contribute right away and become a long-term piece of a line group that's being totally remade for 2026 and still has questions for the future.

STEELERS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

3

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**ATLANTA**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	AT NEW ENGLAND	1:00
SEPT. 27	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
OCT. 1	AT CLEVELAND	8:15
OCT. 11	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
OCT. 25	**NEW ORLEANS** (PARIS)	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 1	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	BYE	
NOV. 15	AT CINCINNATI	8:20
NOV. 22	AT PHILADELPHIA	4:25
NOV. 27	**DENVER**	**3:00**
DEC. 6	**HOUSTON**	**8:20**
DEC. 14	AT JACKSONVILLE	8:15
DEC. 20	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
TBD	**CAROLINA**	
JAN. 3	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
TBD	AT BALTIMORE	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	AFC PLAYOFFS	9
2022		9
2023	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2024	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2025	AFC PLAYOFFS	10

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **MIKE McCARTHY**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **174-112-2**
Offensive Coordinator: **BRIAN ANGELICHIO**
Defensive Coordinator: **PATRICK GRAHAM**
Special Teams Coordinator: **DANNY CROSSMAN**
Quarterbacks: **TOM ARTH**
Running Backs: **RAMON CHINYOUNG SR.**
Wide Receivers: **ADAM HENRY**
Tight Ends: **ROBERT KUGLER**
Offensive Line: **JAMES CAMPEN**
Defensive Line: **DOMATA PEKO**
Outside Linebackers: **C.J. AH YOU**
Inside Linebackers: **SCOTT McCURLEY**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **JASON SIMMONS**
Assistant Head Coach/Secondary: **JOE WHITT JR.**

It's a new era in Pittsburgh, and the Steelers tapped a native son to pull them out of their version of "Groundhog Day." Super Bowl champion Mike McCarthy has been tasked with taking the Steelers beyond the first-round exits that haunted the Steelers in the final years of Mike Tomlin's 19-year run as head coach. The foundation is strong and the floor is high, but elevating above the recent results will require McCarthy to get much more out of an aging roster that underwent just a handful of changes heading into the 2026 season.

OFFENSE

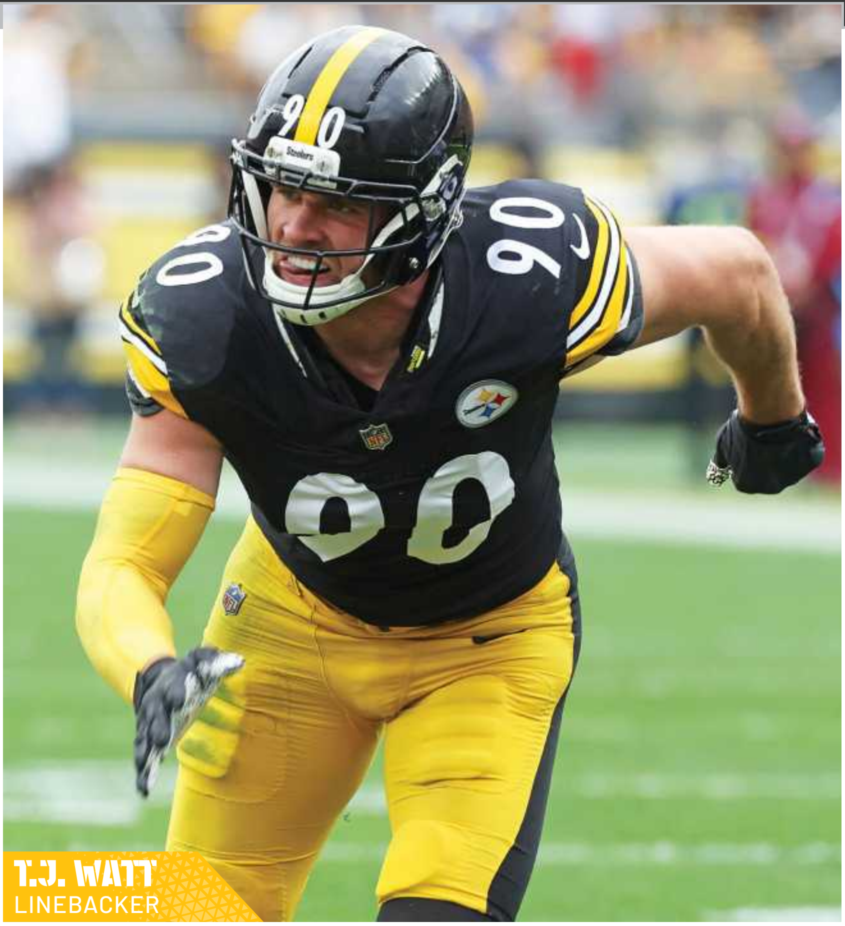
For McCarthy, it will likely begin with a reunion with the quarterback who was front and center for some of his best years in Green Bay. Though he was unsigned and undecided in the weeks following the NFL Draft, Aaron Rodgers appeared poised to return to Pittsburgh for his 22nd NFL season, setting up a QB-coach partnership that won a Super Bowl and rattled off eight consecutive playoff appearances from 2009-16. There were certainly some moments last season when Rodgers showed his age, but he was much better than what he displayed in two miserable, injury-marred seasons with the Jets. It wasn't prime Rodgers by any means, but it was enough for a crafty Steelers offense that was able to move the chains when it needed to with quick, short passes and occasionally take the top off a defense whenever Rodgers could connect with wide receiver DK Metcalf. If Rodgers doesn't return, it will be a mix of Mason Rudolph, Will Howard and third-round pick Drew Allar competing to be the latest signal-caller for the Steelers.

Outside of quarterback, the main characters are mostly unchanged except for one major addition at wide receiver. Pittsburgh was more than happy to take in Michael Pittman Jr. when the Indianapolis Colts needed to find him a new home. Rarely flashy but consistently productive, Pittman has been one of the league's steadiest receivers since he arrived in Indy in 2020 and found success through constant QB turnover and significant stretches without much support from his fellow wideouts. He certainly never played alongside someone like Metcalf, who is one of the few wide receivers who can outsize the 6-foot-4, 223-pound Pittman. Metcalf has fit in nicely with the Steelers, but his game-by-game production was all over the map last year. A rebound season could be in order here, as Metcalf is coming off a year in which he posted career lows in targets (99) and receiving yards (850).

"Large" remains a theme with Pittsburgh's pass-catchers when you look to the TE room, where the 6-foot-7, 264-pound Darnell Washington has emerged as a legitimate problem for opposing defenses. Paired with veteran Pat Freiermuth, Washington surpassed his reception total from his first two seasons combined with 31 catches and was nearly impossible to bring down on the first hit, making him a go-to option on third downs and inside the red zone.

The departure of running back Kenneth Gainwell (Tampa Bay) following a breakout of sorts shouldn't be overlooked, but Pittsburgh quickly moved to replace him with another player who experienced a career renaissance in 2025, Rico Dowdle. He'll be paired with Jaylen Warren, who handled his first year as the starter well and gives the Steelers' big-play potential out of the backfield.

The offensive line they'll run behind returns most of its key players from 2025, but some change could be in order depending on the health status of left tackle Broderick Jones, who is coming off a season-ending neck injury and did not



T.J. WATT
LINEBACKER

CHARLES LECLAIRE-IMAGN IMAGES

have his fifth-year option picked up. First-round selection Max Iheanachor projects as a right tackle, indicating that a move from the right side to the left could be in order for Troy Fautanu. The Steelers also used a third-round pick on Gennings Dunker, who is expected to transition from tackle to guard.

DEFENSE

Pittsburgh's defense went through some uncharacteristic struggles in 2025, ranking 29th against the pass and 26th in total defense. Turnovers were its saving grace — the Steelers were plus-12 on the season — but no one would have mistaken this group for the Steel Curtain of yesteryear. The Steelers, under new defensive coordinator Patrick Graham, will simply need their key players to be better.

It starts with the star, T.J. Watt, who is most primed for a bounce-back season after an incredibly frustrating 2025 campaign that included a three-game absence due to a partially collapsed lung. He notched only seven sacks, marking the first time since his rookie year that he posted single digits during a season in which he played more than 10 games. The Steelers inked Watt to a mega extension before the season and are banking on their All-Pro to continue to ascend. A decline in his age-32 season would signal big problems for a defense that feeds off Watt's big plays and super-sized energy.

There is still significant support around Watt, who actually finished third on the team in sacks behind Alex Highsmith (9.5) and Nick Herbig (7.5). Pressuring the QB from the edges shouldn't be a problem for Pittsburgh. Additionally, the Steelers beefed up their depth on the Cameron Heyward-led defensive line with the signing of Sebastian Joseph-Day, to go along with another year of development from Derrick Harmon.

With linebackers Patrick Queen and Payton Wilson entrenched in the middle of the field, Pittsburgh added two key defensive backs behind them, cornerback Jamel Dean and safety Jaquan Brisker, to further bolster a secondary that dealt with injuries and inconsistency throughout 2025. Jalen Ramsey, a three-time All-Pro at CB, said he found "renewed energy" when he had to play some safety during the second half of the season. Ramsey is a pivotal chess piece for Graham, who can help Pittsburgh maximize its coverages if the back end can stay just a little healthier than last season. Ideally, that will result in a little more production from Ramsey on the stat sheet, as he's coming off a season in which he posted just one interception and eight passes defended to go along with a career-high three sacks. Dean and Joey Porter Jr. are the likely starters on the outside at cornerback, while third-round draft pick Daylen Everette can potentially carve out a niche on special teams or as key depth in a Steelers defensive backfield that is no stranger to adjusting plans on the fly.

SPECIALISTS

There aren't many kickers better equipped for the unpredictable and unfriendly elements of the AFC North than Chris Boswell. Now in his 12th season, all with the Steelers, Boswell seems to be getting even better, especially from long distance. Of the 52 field goals he's made from 50-plus yards throughout his career, 22 have come in the past two seasons. The Steelers, perennially locked in close games, have needed every single one. Fourth-round draft pick Kaden Wetjen is an early candidate to spice up the Steelers' return game, which ranked in the bottom half of the league on both kickoffs and punts. Throughout his time at Iowa, Wetjen returned six kicks for touchdowns while averaging 17.7 yards on punt returns and 27.5 yards on kickoffs.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Don't discount the new-coach bump. It happens somewhere every year. For it to be the Steelers, McCarthy will need to tap into the success he found on the offensive side of the ball in Dallas and marry it with a bounce-back year from the defense. He's got the track record, and so do plenty of players across the roster, so nothing can truly be ruled out from one of the NFL's most experienced teams.

2025 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept. 7	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**34-32**
Sept. 14	Seattle	L	17-31
Sept. 21	**AT NEW ENGLAND**	**W**	**21-14**
Sept. 28	**MINNESOTA**	**W**	**24-21**
Oct. 12	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**23-9**
Oct. 16	at Cincinnati	L	31-33
Oct. 26	Green Bay	L	25-35
Nov. 2	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**27-20**
Nov. 9	at L.A. Chargers	L	10-25
Nov. 16	**CINCINNATI**	**W**	**34-12**
Nov. 23	at Chicago	L	28-31
Nov. 30	Buffalo	L	7-26
Dec. 7	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**27-22**
Dec. 15	**MIAMI**	**W**	**28-15**
Dec. 21	**AT DETROIT**	**W**	**29-24**
Dec. 28	at Cleveland	L	6-13
Jan. 4	**BALTIMORE**	**W**	**26-24**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 12	Houston	L	6-30

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	305.6	25	11
RUSHING	103.3	26	12
PASSING	202.4	22	10
SCORING	23.4	15	9
THIRD DOWN %	40.0	15	8
POINTS/PLAY	0.386	14	7

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	356.9	26	15
RUSHING	113.1	13	9
PASSING	243.9	29	14
SCORING	22.8	17	9
INTERCEPTIONS	15	T8	4
SACKS	48	6	3
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.354	12	7
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+12	4	3

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
AARON RODGERS	498	327	3,322	24	7
MASON RUDOLPH	52	38	310	2	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JAYLEN WARREN	211	958	4.5	6
KENNETH GAINWELL	114	537	4.7	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
KENNETH GAINWELL	73	486	6.7	3
DK METCALF	59	850	14.4	6
PAT FREIERMUTH	41	486	11.9	4
JAYLEN WARREN	40	333	8.3	2
JONNU SMITH	38	222	5.8	2
CALVIN AUSTIN III	31	372	12.0	3

KICKING: Chris Boswell, 27-32 FGs, 42-43 PATs, 123 points; **TACKLES:** Payton Wilson, 126; Patrick Queen, 120; **SACKS:** Alex Highsmith, 9.5; Nick Herbig, 7.5; **INTERCEPTIONS:** 4 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

JAY BIGGERSTAFF–IMAGN IMAGES

SURPRISE! You truly can find out some of the biggest news of your life at the most surprising times. New Steelers wide receiver **Michael Pittman Jr.** knows this all too well, as he was in the midst of a fishing trip with his brother in Uganda when he learned he'd been traded to Pittsburgh. Pittman wound up cutting the trip short by six days — he'd already caught plenty of fish — and flew straight to Pittsburgh to meet his new coaches and teammates. What's even crazier: His wife predicted a trade to the Steel City just a few weeks earlier. "My wife had told me that she had a dream that I was wearing a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey," Pittman told reporters at his introductory press conference. "I kind of just brushed it off. I went: 'Yeah, OK. Cool.' Right? And then it's just kind of crazy how it happened."

DON'T SLEEP ON WILL Sixth-round quarterbacks don't often get much shine, but Will Howard took center stage and split reps evenly with veteran Mason Rudolph at the start of Pittsburgh's offseason program. With Aaron Rodgers unsigned, the Steelers boasted just two quarterbacks on the roster for their bonus minicamp, which is allotted to teams with new head coaches. "I've really enjoyed Will," new Steelers offensive coordinator Brian Angelichio told reporters.

THROUGH AND THROUGH There are Pittsburgh guys, and then there's Mike McCarthy. The Steelers' new head coach is truly in his dream job. McCarthy grew up in Pittsburgh's Greenfield neighborhood and still boasts a strong Pittsburgh accent. His return to the Steel City is the first time he's worked in his hometown since a three-year stint at the University of Pittsburgh from 1989-92, where he served as a graduate assistant and a wide receivers coach. "I never, in my wildest dreams, thought that Mike Tomlin would retire," McCarthy said. "This was an opportunity, based on history, that I thought was well past me. So when it did become available and the conversations that led up the interview, I just felt that this was something that was meant to be."

SCOUTING THE STEELERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PITTSBURGH

"Everyone in Pittsburgh expects Aaron Rodgers to re-sign and run it back with the Steelers for his old head coach, Mike McCarthy. Rodgers had fun last season, and he fit in well in Pittsburgh. … The Steelers got Rodgers more weapons outside to go with imposing the DK Metcalf in Michael Pittman Jr. and Germie Bernard. Solid moves. … Darnell Washington is a beast of a tight end. … The offensive line lacks ideal talent. Omar Khan needs to keep investing in the blocking. Max Iheanchor is a step in the right direction. They need more good young linemen like him and fellow rookie Gennings Dunker. … Pat Freiermuth still gets the job done. … Jaylen Warren is one of the top pass-catching backs in the NFL and should be complemented very well by Rico Dowdle. … Cameron Heyward is up in years, but he's the consummate Steeler and keeps on top of his game. … T.J. Watt dealt with some injuries last year, but he's healthy now. When he's right, no one stops Watt. … Alex Highsmith has pass-rushing skills to rival Watt, a former NFL Defensive Player of the Year. … Payton Wilson's hustle and instincts are what Steelers football is all about. Patrick Queen has still got it at linebacker. … DeShon Elliott has a lot of pop as a tackler. … Jalen Ramsey at nickel is a Swiss Army knife. … Jaquan Brisker was a good pick-up at safety. … Joey Porter Jr. has emerged as one of the best young corners in the league. … Nick Herbig doesn't get enough credit as the third edge rusher."

2026 STEELERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Howard, Will	QB	6-4	235	1	Ohio State	D6-25	D6-Pit-25
8	Rodgers, Aaron	QB	6-2	223	21	Cal	FA-NYJ-25	D1-GB-05
2	Rudolph, Mason	QB	6-5	235	8	Oklahoma State	FA-Ten-25	D3a-Pit-18

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13	Dowdle, Rico	RB	5-11	218	5	South Carolina	FA-Car-26	FA-Dal-20
21	Homer, Travis	RB	5-10	211	7	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Chi-26	D6a-Sea-19
20	Johnson, Kaleb	RB	6-1	224	1	Iowa	D3-25	D3-Pit-25
35	Nichols, Lew	RB	5-10	220	1	Central Michigan	FA-25	D7-GB-23
30	Warren, Jaylen	RB	5-8	215	4	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-Pit-22

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Bell, Jaheim	TE	6-2	241	2	Florida State	FA-26	D7-Pit-24
85	Burgess, Cole	WR	6-1	198	1	SUNY Cortland	FA-26	FA-Cin-24
88	Freiermuth, Pat	TE	6-5	258	5	Penn State	D2-21	D2-Pit-21
45	Galbreath, JJ	TE	6-4	240	1	South Dakota	FA-26	FA-Pit-25
84	Hurleman, Max	WR	5-11	200	1	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-Pit-25
89	Johnson, Brandon	WR	6-2	195	4	UCF	FA-26	FA-Den-22
4	Metcalf, DK	WR	6-4	235	7	Ole Miss	T-Sea-25	D2b-Sea-19
27	Perry, A.T.	WR	6-5	205	2	Wake Forest	FA-26	D6-NO-23
11	Pittman Jr., Michael	WR	6-4	223	6	USC	T-Ind-26	D2-Ind-20
15	Skowronek, Ben	WR	6-3	224	5	Notre Dame	FA-24	D7-LAR-21
87	Smith, Brandon	WR	6-2	215	1	Iowa	FA-26	FA-Dal-21
80	Washington, Darnell	TE	6-7	264	2	Georgia	D3-23	D3-Pit-23
14	Wilson, Roman	WR	6-0	192	2	Michigan	D3a-24	D3a-Pit-24

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74	Anderson, Spencer	OL	6-5	305	3	Maryland	D7b-23	D7b-Pit-23
60	Cook, Dylan	T	6-5	305	3	Montana	FA-23	FA-TB-22
68	Driscoll, Jack	OL	6-5	312	6	Auburn	FA-25	D4-Phi-20
76	Fautanu, Troy	T	6-4	317	2	Washington	D1-24	D1-Pit-24
54	Frazier, Zach	C	6-3	310	2	West Virginia	D2-24	D2-Pit-24
67	Hoffman, Brock	G/C	6-4	318	3	Virginia Tech	FA-Dal-26	FA-Cle-22
77	Jones, Broderick	T	6-5	311	3	Georgia	D1-23	D1-Pit-23
79	Jones, Steven	OL	6-5	342	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Jac-24
65	Laumea, Sataoa	G	6-4	319	1	Utah	FA-26	D6a-Sea-24
62	McCollum, Ryan	C	6-5	300	4	Texas A&M	W-Det-22	FA-Hou-21
66	McCormick, Mason	G	6-5	315	2	South Dakota State	D4-24	D4-Pit-24
72	Nester, Doug	OL	6-6	306	1	West Virginia	FA-24	FA-Min-24
69	Thompson, Lorenzo	T	6-6	305	1	Rhode Island	FA-26	FA-Cle-24
78	Williams, Aiden	G	6-5	314	1	Minnesota-Duluth	FA-26	FA-Pit-25

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Baugh, Kyler	DT	6-3	295	1	Minnesota	FA-25	FA-NO-24
95	Benton, Keeanu	DT	6-4	309	3	Wisconsin	D2b-23	D2b-Pit-23
94	Black, Yahya	DL	6-5	330	1	Iowa	D5-25	D5-Pit-25
72	Goodlow, Anthony	DL	6-5	300	1	Oklahoma State	FA-25	FA-LAR-24
99	Harmon, Derrick	DT	6-4	313	1	Oregon	D1-25	D1-Pit-25
97	Heyward, Cameron	DT	6-5	295	15	Ohio State	D1-11	D1-Pit-11
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DE	6-4	310	7	Rutgers	FA-Ten-26	D6-LAR-18
98	Leal, DeMarvin	DE	6-4	290	4	Texas A&M	D3-22	D3-Pit-22
91	Lee, Logan	DL	6-5	291	2	Iowa	D6a-24	D6a-Pit-24
94	Lowry, Dean	DL	6-6	296	10	Northwestern	FA-Min-24	D4b-GB-16
93	Otomewo, Esezi	DT	6-5	282	3	Minnesota	FA-Jac-25	D5-Min-22
68	Ritzie, Jahvaree	DL	6-4	294	1	North Carolina	FA-26	FA-NE-25

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Bruener, Carson	LB	6-2	226	1	Washington	D7a-25	D7a-Pit-25
50	Harrison, Malik	LB	6-3	255	6	Ohio State	FA-Bal-25	D3c-Bal-20
57	Henry, K.J.	LB	6-4	255	3	Clemson	FA-26	D5-Was-23
51	Herbig, Nick	LB	6-2	240	3	Wisconsin	D4-23	D4-Pit-23
56	Highsmith, Alex	LB	6-4	242	6	Charlotte	D3-20	D3-Pit-20
55	Holcomb, Cole	LB	6-1	240	6	North Carolina	FA-Was-23	D5b-Was-19
6	Queen, Patrick	LB	6-0	230	6	LSU	FA-Bal-24	D1-Bal-20
33	Sawyer, Jack	LB	6-5	260	1	Ohio State	D4-25	D4-Pit-25
90	Watt, T.J.	LB	6-4	252	9	Wisconsin	D1-17	D1-Pit-17
45	Welschof, Julius	LB	6-6	265	2	Charlotte	FA-24	FA-Pit-24
41	Wilson, Payton	LB	6-4	242	2	NC State	D3b-24	D3b-Pit-24

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Brisker, Jaquan	S	6-1	204	4	Penn State	FA-Chi-22	D2b-Chi-22
49	Castro, Sebastian	DB	5-11	203	1	Iowa	W-TB-25	FA-Pit-25
35	Dean, Jamel	CB	6-1	206	7	Auburn	FA-TB-26	D3a-TB-19
26	Echols, Brandin	CB	5-10	179	5	Kentucky	FA-NYJ-25	D6b-NYJ-21
25	Elliott, DeShon	S	6-1	210	8	Texas	FA-Mia-24	D6a-Bal-18
48	Henderson, Jack	S	6-2	215	1	Minnesota	FA-26	FA-Car-25
38	Jamison, D'Shawn	CB	5-10	185	2	Texas	FA-24	FA-SF-23
34	Kent, Donte	CB	5-10	189	1	Central Michigan	D7b-25	D7b-Pit-25
24	Porter Jr., Joey	CB	6-2	193	3	Penn State	D2a-23	D2a-Pit-23
5	Ramsey, Jalen	CB	6-1	208	10	Florida State	T-Mia-25	D1-Jac-16
22	Samuel Jr., Asante	CB	5-10	180	5	Florida State	FA-25	D2-LAC-21
	Savage, Darnell	S	5-11	198	7	Maryland	FA-Buf-26	D1-GB-19
19	Slaughter, Doneiko	CB	6-0	190	1	Arkansas	FA-26	FA-Jac-25
27	Trice Jr., Cory	CB	6-3	206	3	Purdue	D7a-23	D7a-Pit-23

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
57	Adomitis, Cal	LS	6-2	238	4	Pitt	FA-25	FA-Cin-22
9	Boswell, Chris	K	6-2	185	11	Rice	FA-15	FA-Hou-14
19	Johnston, Cameron	P	5-11	194	8	Ohio State	FA-26	FA-Phi-17
46	Kuntz, Christian	LS	6-1	228	5	Duquesne	FA-20	FA-NE-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	4	DK Metcalf	14	Roman Wilson
WR	11	Michael Pittman Jr.	15	Ben Skowronek
WR	17	Germie Bernard (R)	42	Kaden Wetjen (R)
LT	77	Broderick Jones	60	Dylan Cook
LG	74	Spencer Anderson	73	Gennings Dunker (R)
C	54	Zach Frazier	67	Brock Hoffman
RG	66	Mason McCormick	68	Jack Driscoll
RT	76	Troy Fautanu	71	Max Iheanachor (R)
TE	88	Pat Freiermuth	80	Darnell Washington
QB	8	Aaron Rodgers	2	Mason Rudolph
RB	30	Jaylen Warren	13	Rico Dowdle

DEFENSE

DE	99	Derrick Harmon	69	Sebastian Joseph-Day
DT	95	Keeanu Benton	78	Yahya Black
DE	97	Cameron Heyward	93	Esezi Otomewo
SLB	56	Alex Highsmith	51	Nick Herbig
ILB	6	Patrick Queen	50	Malik Harrison
ILB	41	Payton Wilson	55	Cole Holcomb
WLB	90	T.J. Watt	33	Jack Sawyer
CB	24	Joey Porter Jr.	23	Daylen Everette (R)
CB	35	Jamel Dean	22	Asante Samuel Jr.
NB	5	Jalen Ramsey	26	Brandin Echols
SS	25	DeShon Elliott	49	Sebastian Castro
FS	3	Jaquan Brisker	28	Robert Spears-Jennings (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Chris Boswell	KR	42	Kaden Wetjen (R)
P	19	Cameron Johnston	PR	42	Kaden Wetjen (R)

41.3 New Steelers CB Jamel Dean allowed a 41.3 passer rating in coverage last year, the lowest of any defender who was targeted 50 or more times.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Max Iheanachor	OT	6-6	321	Arizona State
2	Germie Bernard	WR	6-1	206	Alabama
3	Drew Allar	QB	6-5	228	Penn State
3	Daylen Everette	CB	6-1	196	Georgia
3	Gennings Dunker	OT	6-5	319	Iowa
4	Kaden Wetjen	WR	5-9	193	Iowa
5	Riley Nowakowski	TE	6-2	250	Indiana
6	Gabriel Rubio	DT	6-5	321	Notre Dame
7	Robert Spears-Jennings	S	6-1	205	Oklahoma
7	Eli Heidenreich	RB/WR	6-0	198	Navy

The Steelers attacked a need with the addition of the massive Max Iheanachor, who could be a factor right away if Broderick Jones continues to be nagged by injury. Germie Bernard was a high-volume receiver at Alabama, and he'll seek to find a role alongside big targets Michael Pittman Jr. and DK Metcalf. Pittsburgh stayed in-state with the selection of Drew Allar, who possesses all the tools coaches covet but struggled in big games throughout his career. He could be in the mix right away, or he could be a developmental option. The unofficial face of the 10-man Steelers draft class went in the third round, when Gennings Dunker and his glorious mullet were added to fortify depth on the offensive line.

TEXANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

1

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**BUFFALO**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
SEPT. 27	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
OCT. 4	**DALLAS**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
OCT. 18	**JACKSONVILLE** (LONDON)	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 25	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	BYE	
NOV. 8	AT L.A. CHARGERS	4:05
NOV. 15	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
NOV. 19	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**8:!5**
NOV. 29	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	AT PITTSBURGH	8:20
DEC. 13	AT WASHINGTON	1:00
DEC. 20	**JACKSONVILLE**	**1:00**
DEC. 24	AT PHILADELPHIA	8:15
JAN. 4	AT GREEN BAY	8:15
TBD	**TENNESSEE**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021		4
2022		3
2023	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2024	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2025	AFC PLAYOFFS	12

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **DEMECO RYANS**
Record With Team: **32-19**
Career Record: **32-19**
Offensive Coordinator: **NICK CALEY**
Defensive Coordinator: **MATT BURKE**
Special Teams Coordinator: **FRANK ROSS**
Quarterbacks: **JERRY SCHUPLINKSKI**
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: **DANNY BARRETT**
Wide Receivers/Pass Game Coordinator: **BEN McDANIELS**
Tight Ends: **JAMES FERENTZ**
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: **COLE POPOVICH**
Defensive Line/Defensive Run Game Coordinator: **ROD WRIGHT**
Linebackers: **BILL DAVIS**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator: **CORY UNDLIN**
Defensive Backs: **DINO VASSO**
Safeties: **STEPHEN ADEGOKE**

The big picture for the Texans includes an expensive undertaking in the Houston suburbs: a state-of-the art team training facility with an accompanying entertainment and retail complex set to open in 2029.

The football side for the Texans, though, is built around their immediate and lofty ambitions for the 2026 season.

The Texans are thinking Super Bowl. The team is built around a championship-caliber defense that finished first in the league in total defense last season.

Despite that loaded unit, the Texans came up short again in the playoffs largely because of a horrendous offensive performance in a loss to the New England Patriots in the AFC divisional round on a wintry January day at Gillette Stadium. And they're 0-7 all-time in the second round of the postseason, never reaching the AFC Championship Game. What's going to be different now in this, the 25th anniversary year of the franchise's inaugural season?

"It was hard because you really felt like we were there," says Hannah McNair, a high-ranking Texans executive and the wife of principal owner Cal McNair. "It was hard to come up short. I think we'll get better."

Obviously, it was time for action. The Texans have committed hundreds of millions of dollars toward free agents and rewarding top in-house players like All-Pro edge Will Anderson Jr. ($150 million extension, making him the highest-paid non-quarterback in NFL history).

Now, the team needs to deliver and take the next step. "This has been the fun part," Cal McNair says. "We're excited that the holes are filled."

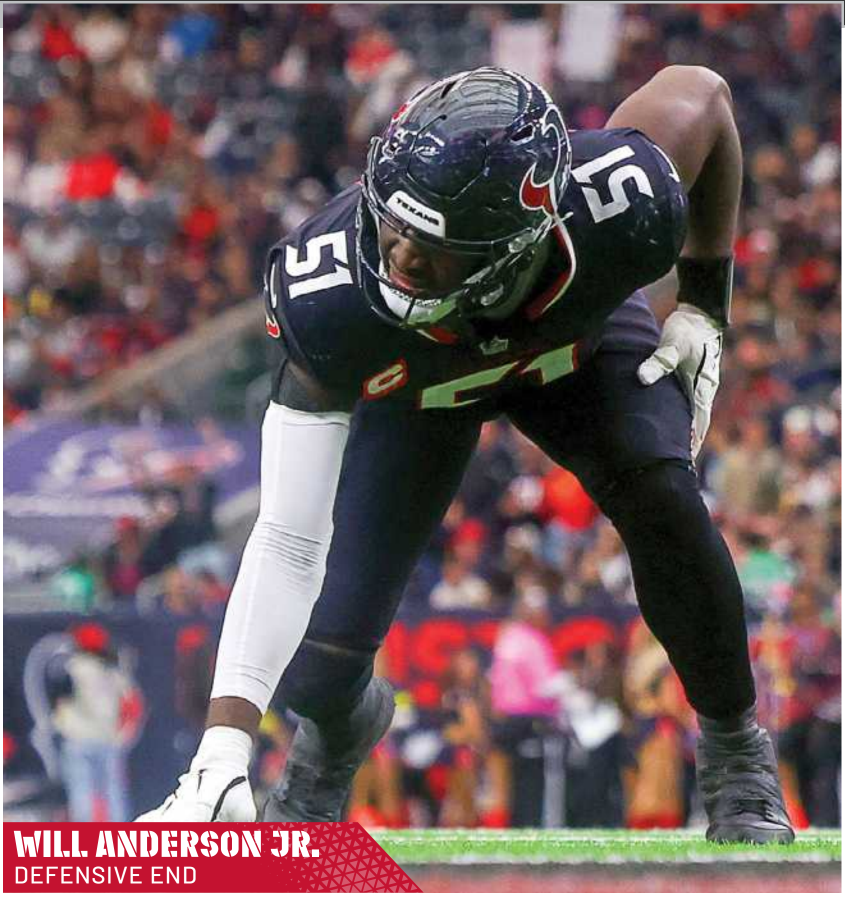
OFFENSE

C.J. Stroud has arrived at something of a career crossroads. The former NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year clearly has the arm talent and skill, but the 24-year-old's rocky postseason performance last season (five interceptions, five fumbles, seven total turnovers in two games) was troubling. If the Texans can't trust their quarterback in the playoffs, how can they move forward as an offense?

Stroud has gotten in much leaner shape this offseason and has maintained a blue-collar strategy with a lot of private throwing sessions. Texans head coach DeMeco Ryans has expressed faith in Stroud, as has the McNair family and general manager Nick Caserio. However, they didn't commit to him on a long-term basis. Instead, they secured him through 2027 with a $25.9 million fifth-year option. "I'm still growing," Stroud says. "This ain't the end of C.J. Stroud. Just going to take my best foot forward."

The Texans struggled to run the football last year without an injured Joe Mixon, so they traded for power back David "Knuckles" Montgomery, whose downhill presence should make the play-action game more effective. They believe in the former Detroit Lion enough that they signed him to a two-year, $16.5 million extension.

The overhaul of the offensive line was once again dramatic: trading away Tytus Howard to the Cleveland Browns, signing left guard Wyatt Teller (two years, worth up to $23 million) and right tackle Braden Smith (two years, $25 million) and retaining right guard Ed Ingram (three years, $37.5 million). Feisty offensive line coach Cole Popovich continues to put his stamp on a group that was solid in pass protection last year but awful in run-blocking. Drafting first-round guard-center Keylan "Big Red" Rutledge was emblematic of the gritty style the Texans want from their line.



WILL ANDERSON JR.
DEFENSIVE END

THOMAS SHEA-IMAGN IMAGES

Wide receiver Nico Collins' concussion was a big factor in the New England debacle. When Collins is healthy, he's one of the best overall receivers and contested-catch types in the NFL. Jayden Higgins has similar size to Collins, and his role should increase this year. Slot duties should go to Jaylin Noel, who's fast and shifty as a route-runner. Tank Dell's outlook is up in the air due to his ongoing rehab from a serious knee injury he suffered two seasons ago.

Tight end Dalton Schultz is capable as a move-the-chains pass-catcher, but the players behind him have a lot to prove. Marlin Klein, a native of Germany, has size and speed but is inexperienced. Foster Moreau should provide some stability.

DEFENSE

Best defense in the league? Yes, the Texans have earned that distinction. And they've arguably improved since last season.

The safety spot opposite Pro Bowler Calen Bullock was an issue last year due to injuries and bad chemistry with an ultimately discarded C.J. Gardner-Johnson. In his place: former Philadelphia team captain Reed Blankenship, a rangy, sound tackler. He'll complement Bullock, a true center fielder who caused three turnovers in one game against Buffalo Bills star Josh Allen and ran back an Aaron Rodgers interception for a touchdown in the playoff win over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The pass rush is elite, headlined by Anderson and Pro Bowl defensive end Danielle Hunter. They combined for 27 sacks, 45 quarterback hits and 35 tackles for a loss in the regular season. Both got new deals.

The run-stopping was stout enough, but the defensive line lacked ideal size. The Texans fortified the middle with 326-pound Ohio State All-America defensive tackle Kayden McDonald, drafting him in the second round to work in tandem with Sheldon Rankins and Tommy Togiai. They also added a tall and active 3-technique in former Tampa Bay Buccaneers second-rounder Logan Hall.

Pro Bowl middle linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair parlayed a strong season into a three-year, $54 million deal. He's regarded as an extension of Ryans on the field as an emotional, hard-hitting leader and the designated green dot communicator.

Henry To'oTo'o has improved his tackling in an attempt to hold onto his starting job. He faces a challenge from E.J. Speed for playing time.

The Texans boast the top secondary in the league. There's $90 million All-Pro cornerback Derek Stingley Jr., who catches and tracks the football better than most receivers. Pro Bowl corner Kamari Lassiter is challenging Stingley for big plays. Jalen Pitre is a big hitter at nickel who memorably helicoptered Kansas City Chiefs receiver Rashee Rice. The third corner shouldn't be an issue if Jaylin Smith makes a full recovery from a torn meniscus he suffered as a rookie.

Backup safety is competitive between M.J. Stewart, rookie Kamari Ramsey and 2025 sixth-round pick Jaylen Reed. Ramsey can play nickel and should be Pitre's primary backup.

SPECIALISTS

There's a lot of faith in record-tying placekicker Ka'imi Fairbairn, who landed a two-year, $13 million contract extension after nailing 44 field goals last season. Fairbairn shouldn't have to kick so frequently this year, if the red-zone offense is even competent. The Texans weren't satisfied with punter Tommy Townsend, so they let him walk in free agency and are staging a punter competition in training camp after trading for New Orleans Saints punter Kai Kroeger and signing former Syracuse standout Jack Stonehouse. Long-snapping is in good hands with Austin Brinkman, and special teams coordinator Frank Ross' kick coverage teams are sharp and athletic, especially Jake Hummel and Tremon Smith. Noel is a real threat on punt and kickoff returns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Bottom line: The Texans have a Super Bowl-caliber defense and an offense that needs to hold up its end of the bargain. The running game is getting an upgrade to take pressure off of Stroud after a shaky postseason. While the Texans are likely to make the playoffs for the fourth year in a row, this is obviously a crucial season for their long-term goals.

2025 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 7	at L.A. Rams	L	9-14
Sept. 15	Tampa Bay	L	19-20
Sept. 21	at Jacksonville	L	10-17
Sept. 28	**TENNESSEE**	**W**	**26-0**
Oct. 5	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**44-10**
Oct. 20	at Seattle	L	19-27
Oct. 26	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**26-15**
Nov. 2	Denver	L	15-18
Nov. 9	**JACKSONVILLE**	**W**	**36-29**
Nov. 16	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**16-13**
Nov. 20	**BUFFALO**	**W**	**23-19**
Nov. 30	**AT INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**20-16**
Dec. 7	**AT KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**20-10**
Dec. 14	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**40-20**
Dec. 21	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**23-21**
Dec. 27	**AT L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**20-16**
Jan. 4	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**38-30**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 12	**AT PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**30-6**
Jan. 18	at New England	L	16-28

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	327.0	18	9
RUSHING	108.9	22	10
PASSING	218.1	14	6
SCORING	23.8	13	7
THIRD DOWN %	37.2	23	11
POINTS/PLAY	0.367	16	8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	277.2	1	1
RUSHING	93.7	4	3
PASSING	183.5	6	4
SCORING	17.4	2	1
INTERCEPTIONS	19	T3	T2
SACKS	47	T7	4
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.298	3	2
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+17	2	1

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
C.J. STROUD	423	273	3,041	19	8
DAVIS MILLS	159	91	915	5	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
WOODY MARKS	196	703	3.6	2
NICK CHUBB	122	506	4.1	3
C.J. STROUD	48	209	4.4	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DALTON SCHULTZ	82	777	9.5	3
NICO COLLINS	71	1,117	15.7	6
JAYDEN HIGGINS	41	525	12.8	6
XAVIER HUTCHINSON	35	428	12.2	3
CHRISTIAN KIRK	28	239	8.5	1

KICKING: Ka'imi Fairbairn, 44-48 FGs, 28-28 PATs, 160 points; **TACKLES:** Azeez Al-Shaair, 103; Henry To'oTo'o, 95; **SACKS:** Danielle Hunter, 15.0; Will Anderson Jr., 12.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** 4 players tied with 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GERMAN IMPORT Rookie tight end Marlin Klein grew up playing soccer and basketball in Germany. "I was always the tallest and fastest kid," he said. Klein moved to the United States as a teenager to attend a Georgia boarding school through former Indianapolis Colts first-round pick and German native Bjoern Werner's Gridiron Imports Foundation and learned the game quickly, earning a scholarship to Michigan. Now, Klein has followed in the footsteps of college teammates Colston Loveland, A.J. Barner and Luke Schoonmaker. "Quite the journey," he said. A second-round pick, Klein met with the Texans extensively. He texted tight ends coach James Ferentz the morning of the draft: "Let's work, let's bring me home. I wanted to come to Houston from the beginning."

COMEBACK STORY Wide receiver **Tank Dell** is in the lab, working on his craft. After a gruesome knee injury suffered in December 2024, Dell underwent two surgeries for a dislocated knee and a torn ACL, MCL and LCL. He's working in the Texans' offseason program, running routes as he tries to regain his old form. The Texans aren't rushing Dell back. His timetable remains unclear. "We all love Tank," head coach DeMeco Ryans said. "I'm hopeful we can get him back to playing, back to the level that he was playing, but we also know how devastating an injury that was for Tank. Just working in silence."

"A BLESSING" Defensive end Dylan Horton is a stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma survivor who won the fight of his life. After his diagnosis and treatment at MD Anderson Cancer Center, he missed the entire 2023 season on the non-football illness list. He returned to play in 2024 and has remained in remission. He is eternally grateful for his survivor's path: "I have so many people to thank for my health. Ringing the bell was a beautiful feeling. It was the end of a chapter, but not the end of my journey."

SCOUTING THE TEXANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP HOUSTON

"C.J. Stroud got the $25.9 million fifth-year club option, but he didn't get the big bag. At least not yet. He raised concerns about his outlook when he had a playoff meltdown in New England. If Stroud plays well, he could cash in next year. If not, they likely keep kicking the can down the road. … Pro Bowl receiver Nico Collins is their go-to guy, and the offense runs a lot better with him in the lineup. … Jayden Higgins gives Houston a twin-tower effect with him and Collins as 6-foot-4 wideouts. … Jaylin Noel's role should expand this year. … Lot of doubts on whether Tank Dell will get back to his old form. … Aireontae Ersery was a real find last year at left tackle. … The run-blocking should be better with the additions of left guard Wyatt Teller, guard-center Keylan Rutledge and right tackle Braden Smith. … Tight end is in good hands with Dalton Schultz as a pass-catcher, but the blocking and depth aren't there. … We feel like Marlin Klein was a real reach as a second-round pick; we had him graded much lower. … David Montgomery should really complement Stroud well. … Having Woody Marks as a third-down back suits him better. … Defense is the best in the league, bar none. … No better pass-rushing tandem than Will Anderson Jr. and Danielle Hunter. Pick your poison. … Tommy Togiai is Mr. Consistent. … Sheldon Rankins is still a good football player. … I thought they overpaid a bit for Azeez Al-Shaair ($54 million), but they love the guy. And he's tough. … No better secondary in football than Derek Stingley Jr., Kamari Lassiter, Calen Bullock, Reed Blankenship and Jalen Pitre. Good luck throwing at those guys."

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 TEXANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Mertz, Graham	QB	6-2	216	1	Florida	D6b-25	D6b-Hou-25
10	Mills, Davis	QB	6-4	225	5	Stanford	D3a-21	D3a-Hou-21
7	Stroud, C.J.	QB	6-3	218	3	Ohio State	D1a-23	D1a-Hou-23

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Brooks, British	RB	5-11	225	2	North Carolina	FA-24	FA-Hou-24
42	Hull, Evan	RB	5-10	209	3	Northwestern	FA-NO-26	D5-Ind-23
25	Jordan, Jawhar	RB	5-10	185	1	Louisville	D6b-24	D6b-Hou-24
4	Marks, Woody	RB	5-10	208	1	USC	D4-25	D4-Hou-25
32	Montgomery, David	RB	5-11	230	7	Iowa State	T-Det-26	D3-Chi-19

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12	Collins, Nico	WR	6-4	222	5	Michigan	D3b-21	D3b-Hou-21
1	Dell, Tank	WR	5-10	165	3	Houston	D3-23	D3-Hou-23
81	Higgins, Jayden	WR	6-4	215	1	Iowa State	D2a-25	D2a-Hou-25
19	Hutchinson, Xavier	WR	6-3	210	3	Iowa State	D6-23	D6-Hou-23
9	Jordan, Brevin	TE	6-3	245	4	Miami (Fla.)	D5-21	D5-Hou-21
85	Kelly, Josh	WR	6-1	192	1	Texas Tech	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
87	Moreau, Foster	TE	6-4	250	7	LSU	FA-NO-26	D4c-LV-19
13	Noel, Jaylin	WR	5-11	201	1	Iowa State	D3a-25	D3a-Hou-25
49	Pryor, Layne	TE	6-3	251	1	Northern Iowa	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
86	Schultz, Dalton	TE	6-5	242	8	Stanford	FA-Dal-23	D4b-Dal-18
8	Stover, Cade	TE	6-4	251	2	Ohio State	D4-24	D4-Hou-24
84	Watson, Justin	WR	6-2	215	8	Pennsylvania	FA-KC-25	D5-TB-18
89	Wayne, Jared	WR	6-3	210	2	Pitt	FA-24	FA-Hou-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
60	Andrews, Jake	C	6-3	308	2	Troy	W-NE-25	D4a-NE-23
67	Brown, Evan	OL	6-3	320	8	SMU	FA-Ari-26	FA-NYG-18
77	Brown, Trent	T	6-8	380	11	Florida	FA-Cin-25	D7a-SF-15
65	Cox, Eli	C	6-4	309	1	Kentucky	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
79	Ersery, Aireontae	T	6-6	330	1	Minnesota	D2b-25	D2b-Hou-25
57	Fisher, Blake	T	6-6	312	2	Notre Dame	D2b-24	D2b-Hou-24
69	Ingram, Ed	G	6-3	307	4	LSU	T-Min-25	D2-Min-22
63	Kingston, Jarrett	T	6-4	308	2	USC	FA-25	D6-SF-24
54	Patterson, Jarrett	C/G	6-4	310	3	Notre Dame	D6a-23	D6a-Hou-23
71	Smith, Braden	T	6-6	312	8	Auburn	FA-Ind-26	D2-Ind-18
62	Sow, Sidy	G	6-5	318	3	Eastern Michigan	D4c-23	D4c-Hou-23
75	Teller, Wyatt	G	6-4	315	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Cle-26	D5-Buf-18

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
51	Anderson Jr., Will	DE	6-4	243	3	Alabama	D1b-23	D1b-Hou-23
50	Byrd, Solomon	DE	6-3	250	1	USC	D7a-24	D7a-Hou-24
95	Gaye, Ali	DE	6-6	265	2	LSU	W-Ten-26	FA-Hou-23
90	Hall, Logan	DT	6-6	283	4	Houston	FA-TB-26	D2a-TB-22
58	Hamilton, Kyonte	DT	6-4	304	1	Rutgers	D7a-25	D7a-Hou-25
92	Horton, Dylan	DE	6-4	275	3	TCU	D4a-23	D4a-Hou-23
55	Hunter, Danielle	DE	6-5	263	10	LSU	FA-Min-24	D3-Min-15
91	Jones, Naquan	DT	6-3	313	5	Michigan State	W-LAC-25	FA-Ten-21
98	Rankins, Sheldon	DT	6-2	305	10	Louisville	FA-Cin-25	D1-NO-16
97	Robinson, Dominique	DL	6-5	275	4	Miami (Ohio)	FA-Chi-26	D5b-Chi-22
53	Tafuna, Junior	DT	6-3	305	1	Utah	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
72	Togiai, Tommy	DT	6-2	296	4	Ohio State	FA-24	D4-Cle-21

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0	Al-Shaair, Azeez	LB	6-2	228	7	Florida Atlantic	FA-Ten-24	FA-SF-19
35	Hansen, Jake	LB	6-1	230	4	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
56	Hill, Jamal	LB	6-0	227	2	Oregon	D6a-24	D6a-Hou-24
33	Hummel, Jake	LB	6-1	229	4	Iowa State	FA-Bal-26	FA-LAR-22
14	Mapu, Marte	LB	6-3	230	3	Sacramento State	T-NE-26	D3-NE-23
45	Speed, E.J.	LB	6-4	227	7	Tarleton State	FA-Ind-25	D5-Ind-19
59	Thomas, Xavier	LB	6-2	250	2	Clemson	D5a-24	D5a-Hou-24
39	To'oTo'o, Henry	LB	6-2	228	3	Alabama	D5-23	D5-Hou-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6	Blankenship, Reed	S	6-1	203	4	Middle Tennessee	FA-Phi-26	FA-Phi-22
2	Bullock, Calen	S	6-3	190	2	USC	D3-24	D3-Hou-24
34	Carter, Ajani	CB	6-2	200	1	Houston	FA-25	FA-KC-25
17	Codrington, Brandon	CB	5-9	185	2	NC Central	FA-26	FA-NYJ-24
21	Darby, Ronald	CB	5-11	193	11	Florida State	FA-Jac-25	D2-Buf-15
36	Huzzie, Alijah	CB	5-10	195	1	North Carolina	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
20	Ingram, Ja'Marcus	CB	6-2	190	4	Buffalo	W-Buf-25	FA-Buf-22
3	Lassiter, Kamari	CB	6-0	180	2	Georgia	D2a-24	D2a-Hou-24
21	Merriweather, Kaevon	S	6-0	212	3	Iowa	FA-25	FA-TB-23
5	Pitre, Jalen	S	6-0	200	4	Baylor	D2-22	D2-Hou-22
23	Reed, Jaylen	S	6-0	212	1	Penn State	D6a-25	D6a-Hou-25
22	Smith, Jaylin	CB	5-11	190	1	USC	D3b-25	D3b-Hou-25
11	Smith, Tremon	CB	5-11	190	8	Central Arkansas	FA-Den-25	D6-KC-18
29	Stewart, M.J.	S	5-11	205	8	North Carolina	FA-Cle-22	D2b-TB-18
24	Stingley Jr., Derek	CB	6-1	195	4	LSU	D1-22	D1-Hou-22

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
40	Brinkman, Austin	LS	6-4	241	1	West Virginia	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
15	Fairbairn, Ka'imi	K	6-0	183	9	UCLA	FA-16	FA-Hou-16
38	Kroeger, Kai	P	6-3	213	1	South Carolina	T-NO-26	FA-NYJ-25

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	12	Nico Collins	19	Xavier Hutchinson
WR	81	Jayden Higgins	1	Tank Dell
WR	13	Jaylin Noel	84	Justin Watson
LT	79	Aireontae Ersery	57	Blake Fisher
LG	75	Wyatt Teller	67	Evan Brown
C	66	Keylan Rutledge (R)	60	Jake Andrews
RG	69	Ed Ingram	64	Febechi Nwaiwu (R)
RT	71	Braden Smith	77	Trent Brown
TE	86	Dalton Schultz	87	Foster Moreau
QB	7	C.J. Stroud	10	Davis Mills
RB	32	David Montgomery	4	Woody Marks

DEFENSE

DE	55	Danielle Hunter	97	Dominique Robinson
DT	98	Sheldon Rankins	93	Kayden McDonald (R)
DT	72	Tommy Togiai	90	Logan Hall
DE	51	Will Anderson Jr.	92	Dylan Horton
MLB	0	Azeez Al-Shaair	45	E.J. Speed
WLB	39	Henry To'oTo'o	35	Jake Hansen
CB	24	Derek Stingley Jr.	11	Tremon Smith
CB	3	Kamari Lassiter	22	Jaylin Smith
NB	5	Jalen Pitre	27	Kamari Ramsey (R)
SS	6	Reed Blankenship	29	M.J. Stewart
FS	2	Calen Bullock	23	Jaylen Reed

SPECIALISTS

K	15	Ka'imi Fairbairn	KR	13	Jaylin Noel
P	38	Kai Kroeger	PR	13	Jaylin Noel

-32.7 Safety Jalen Pitre allowed a league-low -32.7 coverage EPA as the nearest defender in coverage, five points better than Jamel Dean.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: C

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Keylan Rutledge	G/C	6-4	330	Georgia Tech
2	Kayden McDonald	DT	6-3	326	Ohio State
2	Marlin Klein	TE	6-6	250	Michigan
4	Febechi Nwaiwu	G	6-4	319	Oklahoma
4	Wade Woodaz	LB	6-4	235	Clemson
5	Kamari Ramsey	S	6-0	205	USC
6	Lewis Bond	WR	5-11	190	Boston College
7	Aiden Fisher	LB	6-1	231	Indiana

The gritty Keylan Rutledge, nicknamed "Big Red," plays with a road-grader style and is more athletic than he looks — he can dunk a basketball. Rutledge could plug in at center immediately. Kayden McDonald is the consensus top run-stopper in the draft. McDonald, who had multiple first-round grades on league draft boards, has a different, bulkier body type than the norm in head coach DeMeco Ryans' defensive scheme. A native of Germany who grew up playing soccer, Marlin Klein is an emerging international talent. A former walk-on, Febechi Nwaiwu worked his way up to All-SEC and All-America status and immediately adds quality depth. Wade Woodaz is a large converted safety with upside. Kamari Ramsey's versatility is his calling card. Lewis Bond doesn't wow with size or mobility, but he is ultra-productive. Aiden Fisher is a classic underdog: the heart and soul of a national championship team.

COLTS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST
3

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	AT KANSAS CITY	8:20
SEPT. 27	**HOUSTON**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	**WASHINGTON (LONDON)**	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 11	AT PITTSBURGH	1:00
OCT. 18	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
OCT. 25	AT MINNESOTA	1:00
NOV. 1	AT JACKSONVILLE	1:00
NOV. 8	**DALLAS**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	**MIAMI**	**1:00**
NOV. 19	AT HOUSTON	8:15
NOV. 29	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	BYE	
DEC. 13	AT PHILADELPHIA	1:00
DEC. 20	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
TBD	**CINCINNATI**	
JAN. 3	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
TBD	**JACKSONVILLE**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	9
2022	4
2023	9
2024	8
2025	8

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **SHANE STEICHEN**
Record With Team: **25-26**
Career Record: **25-26**
Offensive Coordinator: **JIM BOB COOTER**
Defensive Coordinator: **LOU ANARUMO**
Special Teams Coordinator: **BRIAN MASON**
Quarterbacks: **CAM TURNER**
Running Backs: **DeANDRE SMITH**
Wide Receivers: **REGGIE WAYNE**
Tight Ends: **TOM MANNING**
Offensive Line: **TONY SPARANO JR.**
Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: **ALEX TANNEY**
Defensive Line: **MARION HOBBY**
Linebackers: **JAMES BETTCHER**
Defensive Backs: **JEROME HENDERSON**
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: **CHRIS HEWITT**

Just eight months after the death of longtime Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, daughter Carlie Irsay-Gordon was faced with her first challenging decision as co-owner/CEO. She considered the team's collapse from a 7-1 start to an 8-9 finish unacceptable, and fans clamored for sweeping changes. But Irsay-Gordon couldn't ignore the fact that the Colts had endured injuries to so many key players. That influenced her assessment of general manager Chris Ballard and head coach Shane Steichen.

She decided to give them another chance, despite the fact that Ballard has only one playoff win since his 2017 hiring. Steichen, although a proven play-caller, enters his fourth year with a 25-26 record. They don't need to be reminded that the Colts haven't won the AFC South since Andrew Luck was their quarterback in 2014.

The team can't lean on injuries as an excuse in 2026; Irsay-Gordon expects results now. While much of the roster returns, Ballard has added some younger pieces on defense in hopes of boosting a unit that failed to finish far too many games down the stretch — the Colts lost seven games by eight points or fewer, five of those in a seven-game losing streak to end the season. But the key, first and foremost, will be the health of players most vital to the cause.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Daniel Jones was well on his way to the best season of his seven-year career as the Colts scored on their first 10 possessions and put up 103 points in a 3-0 start. But in November, he suffered a fractured fibula, and then a season-ending torn ACL in December. Although he finished 8-5 as a starter with a career-best 68% completion rate, "Indiana" Jones wasn't on the field to finish what seemed like such a promising run.

Jones is said to be ahead of schedule in his rehab and is expected to be ready for camp. Pro Bowl running back Jonathan Taylor is coming off the second-best season of his career with 1,585 rushing yards and a league-leading 18 TDs on the ground. Four starters return up front, with 2025 second-round pick Jalen Travis taking over at right tackle.

Deep-threat wide receiver Alec Pierce got paid — a four-year deal worth $114 million — but that meant the Colts dealt previous No. 1 wideout Michael Pittman Jr. to the Pittsburgh Steelers. More will be expected of Pierce, who has averaged 18.7 yards per catch in his four seasons. Tight end Tyler Warren shined as a rookie with 76 receptions for 817 yards and four TDs. That was four catches shy of Pittman's team-high total. Expect Warren to get more touches. He stretches the middle of the field and is excellent at moving the chains. Slot receiver Josh Downs, who has 198 catches for 2,140 yards and 11 TDs in three seasons, should get more targets lining up outside.

DEFENSE

The offseason trade of linebacker/captain Zaire Franklin to the Green Bay Packers left a hole in the middle. The Colts hope they filled that with the second-round selection of Georgia linebacker CJ Allen, who was a tackle machine in college. He doesn't possess the same size as Franklin, but he's quicker and could be an effective blitzer. Defensive tackle DeForest Buckner and cornerbacks Charvarius Ward and Sauce Gardner are all looking to bounce back from injuries to play at Pro Bowl levels.

JONATHAN TAYLOR
RUNNING BACK

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-IMAGN IMAGES

Defensive coordinator Lou Anarumo got some familiar help with the addition of free-agent linebacker Akeem Davis-Gaither, who played four seasons for Anarumo with the Cincinnati Bengals. Davis-Gaither had a career-high 117 tackles with the Arizona Cardinals last year. The Colts are hopeful that third-round pick A.J. Haulcy can play right away at safety next to 2025 addition Cam Bynum, who delivered in the first season of a four-year, $60-million deal with 81 tackles and four interceptions. Bynum makes plays. The Colts need these kinds of playmakers to deliver in the clutch.

Defensive end Laiatu Latu, a 2024 first-round pick, made a huge jump in his second season with 45 tackles, 8.5 sacks and three INTs. He impacts the game both as an edge rusher and dropping back in coverage — he had five passes defended, too. Who will bring the heat from the other side is up for grabs. The Colts dipped into free agency again to add end Arden Key, who has 30.5 sacks in eight seasons, as well as Micheal Clemons, who had 8.5 sacks in four seasons with the New York Jets. Key signed a two-year, $16 million deal, and Clemons signed for $17 million over three years. In sticking with the team's overall storyline, much is expected from both veterans. Grover Stewart and Buckner return inside as one of the league's best tandems, presuming Buckner has recovered from a neck injury that led to a stem cell transplant in the offseason. When healthy, Buckner demands double-teams and frees up teammates to make more plays.

SPECIALISTS

The Colts have to decide on a placekicker between Spencer Shrader and Blake Grupe. Shrader was lost to a torn ACL and MCL in the fifth game. Before that, he had made 13-of-14 field goals and all 14 extra points. Grupe was also impressive in making all 11 field goals, including a franchise-record 60-yarder, as well as 10 extra points. Shrader has the edge, but who kicks best in preseason wins this job.

Punter Rigoberto Sanchez and long-snapper Luke Rhodes have been constants since 2017 and 2016, respectively. Rhodes has been to one Pro Bowl. Sanchez averaged a career-best 44.7 net yards last year.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Colts are convinced that the 8-2 start proved they had enough parts to get to the playoffs. But as the collapse reiterated, rarely does everything go according to plan. Players get hurt, and how the Colts recover from those losses will determine if this team makes the playoffs. The Colts have enough offensive firepower to score if Jones is playing to form, Taylor is the reliable workhorse, the line provides protection and rushing lanes and the receivers up their production. Defense is the question. Ward and Gardner can be one of the league's best shutdown corner tandems. Latu could ascend to a Pro Bowl level. Bynum impacts games. But will enough new pieces deliver?

Irsay-Gordon displayed patience in her fateful decision on Ballard and Steichen. But don't misconstrue her choice as weakness. She couldn't have been more stern in specifying expectations. The Colts had better deliver, or she won't hesitate to start anew with fresh faces. The hunch is that the Colts can make the playoffs but lack the parts to be a Super Bowl contender. The question then becomes: Will that be enough to keep the system intact? Throughout his career, Irsay set a high benchmark — winning three consecutive Super Bowls was his goal, and he desperately chased the unprecedented achievement. Irsay-Gordon might not have the same goal, but that's what she grew up around when groomed for the position. She is driven to build upon her father's legacy of one Super Bowl win and deliver for a disillusioned fan base.

2025 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 7	**MIAMI**	**W**	**33-8**
Sept. 14	**DENVER**	**W**	**29-28**
Sept. 21	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**41-20**
Sept. 28	at L.A. Rams	L	20-27
Oct. 5	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**40-6**
Oct. 12	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**31-27**
Oct. 19	**AT L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**38-24**
Oct. 26	**TENNESSEE**	**W**	**38-14**
Nov. 2	at Pittsburgh	L	20-27
Nov. 9	**ATLANTA (OT)**	**W**	**31-25**
Nov. 23	at Kansas City (ot)	L	20-23
Nov. 30	Houston	L	16-20
Dec. 7	at Jacksonville	L	19-36
Dec. 14	at Seattle	L	16-18
Dec. 22	San Francisco	L	27-48
Dec. 28	Jacksonville	L	17-23
Jan. 4	at Houston	L	30-38

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	345.9	9	3
RUSHING	118.1	17	8
PASSING	227.8	9	3
SCORING	27.4	8	4
THIRD DOWN %	42.6	8	5
POINTS/PLAY	0.458	3	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	349.8	23	12
RUSHING	101.9	7	5
PASSING	247.9	T30	T15
SCORING	24.2	20	11
INTERCEPTIONS	14	10	5
SACKS	39	T15	T7
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.370	15	9
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-2	T15	8

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
DANIEL JONES	384	261	3,101	19	8
PHILIP RIVERS	92	58	544	4	3
RILEY LEONARD	67	39	415	2	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JONATHAN TAYLOR	323	1,585	4.9	18
DANIEL JONES	45	164	3.6	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
MICHAEL PITTMAN JR.	80	784	9.8	7
TYLER WARREN	76	817	10.8	4
JOSH DOWNS	58	566	9.8	4
ALEC PIERCE	47	1,003	21.3	6
JONATHAN TAYLOR	46	378	8.2	2

KICKING: Spencer Shrader, 13-14 FGs, 14-14 PATs, 53 points; Michael Badgley, 10-11 FGs, 18-21 PATs, 48 points; Blake Grupe, 11-11 FGs, 10-10 PATs, 43 points
TACKLES: Zaire Franklin, 125; Nick Cross, 120
SACKS: Laiatu Latu, 8.5; 3 players tied with 4.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Camryn Bynum, 4; Laiatu Latu, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

PROPER ATTIRE When local Center Grove High School star **Caden Curry** was drafted in the sixth round, he appeared for the Zoom call in a No. 18 Peyton Manning Super Bowl jersey. He grew up a Colts fan in Greenwood, Indiana, and idolized pass-rushers Robert Mathis and Dwight Freeney. Now Mathis is his line coach. “I had to wear it,” Curry said. “This is something I’ve had for awhile. Obviously, it’s from one of the GOATs from Indianapolis. I’ve always had it in the back of my closet.”

SAMANTHA MADAR/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

PRICEY ITEMS The late owner Jim Irsay had quite a memorabilia collection, and when the family put many of the items up for auction in March, they brought in $93,656,609 in a live auction. The Christie’s auction set 23 world records. A Pink Floyd David Gilmour famed black Stratocaster went for $14.55 million. Writer Jack Kerouac’s original transcript of *On The Road* sold for $12.135 million. Some other top sellers: the saddle jockey Ron Turcotte used on Secretariat for the 1973 Triple Crown run, $1.524 million; the jersey Wayne Gretzky wore when he scored his 500th NHL goal, $952,500; a 28-page notebook of Sylvester Stallone’s original “Rocky” script, $508,000.

STANDING TALL Offensive tackle Jack Wilson played college basketball and football, but he could make NFL history as the tallest player ever at 6-foot-11 if he suits up for a game. He didn’t get the chance last season after suffering a season-ending pectoral injury at camp. He spent some of his rookie year in 2024 on the Colts’ practice squad.

MANNING PIPELINE Attention, Colts fans: Marshall Manning, the 15-year-old son of franchise legend Peyton, is looking to follow in dad’s footsteps as he enters high school. The younger Manning, wearing his father’s No. 16, received high praise as one of the best players in a spring seven-on-seven event in Tennessee.

SCOUTING THE COLTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP INDIANAPOLIS

“A full, healthy season from quarterback Daniel Jones would make a ton of difference for this franchise. Jones is way above average under center. There’s a ton of skill there. … Head coach Shane Steichen has had to overcome a lot of poor personnel decisions by GM Chris Ballard. Ballard should be on the hot seat, but Steichen is a keeper. … The Colts couldn’t afford to lose Alec Pierce as a deep threat, so they paid the freight to hold on to their most dangerous receiver. … Josh Downs is shifty. … Guard Quenton Nelson seems to be in decline. … I like Bernhard Raimann as their left tackle. … Tight end Tyler Warren was a great pick by Ballard. This one, they nailed it. … Jonathan Taylor combines workhorse and home-run-threat qualities. He’s one of the top running backs in the NFL. … I think the Colts will regret not holding on to right tackle Braden Smith. … The pass rush isn’t good enough. Laiatu Latu is their only legitimate every-down defensive end. … Arden Key has bounced around the league. … DeForest Buckner and Grover Stewart are playmakers inside. … Their second-round linebacker CJ Allen should shore up their run-stopping presence. Allen has 4.47 speed in the 40-yard dash. He’s a run-and-hit guy. … Rookie safety A.J. Haulcy is an enforcer with ball skills. … Sauce Gardner’s healthy return should make a big difference for a defense that missed him a ton last year when he got hurt. … I’m not loving the depth on defense. Ballard needs to keep building on that side of the football.”

2026 COLTS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Henigan, Seth	QB	6-3	215	1	Memphis	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
17	Jones, Daniel	QB	6-5	230	7	Duke	FA-Min-25	D1-NYG-19
15	Leonard, Riley	QB	6-4	213	1	Notre Dame	D6-25	D6-Ind-25
5	Richardson Sr., A.	QB	6-4	244	3	Florida	D1-23	D1-Ind-23

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37	Bentley IV, Ulysses	RB	5-10	200	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Ind-25
21	Giddens, DJ	RB	6-0	212	1	Kansas State	D5-25	D5-Ind-25
28	Taylor, Jonathan	RB	5-10	226	6	Wisconsin	D2-20	D2-Ind-20

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
81	Alie-Cox, Mo	TE	6-5	267	8	VCU	FA-17	FA-Ind-17
2	Downs, Josh	WR	5-9	171	3	North Carolina	D3-23	D3-Ind-23
16	Dulin, Ashton	WR	6-2	215	7	Malone	FA-19	FA-Ind-19
6	Gould, Anthony	WR	5-8	174	2	Oregon State	D5-24	D5-Ind-24
86	Mallory, Will	TE	6-4	239	3	Miami (Fla.)	D5-23	D5-Ind-23
49	McKeon, Sean	TE	6-5	255	6	Michigan	FA-24	FA-Dal-20
85	Ogletree, Drew	TE	6-5	260	4	Youngstown State	D6-22	D6-Ind-22
9	Owen, Coleman	WR	5-10	181	1	Ohio	FA-25	FA-Ind-25
83	Pancol, Eli	WR	6-3	205	1	Duke	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
14	Pierce, Alec	WR	6-3	211	4	Cincinnati	D2-22	D2-Ind-22
45	Towt, Carson	TE	6-8	250	1	Notre Dame	FA-26	FA-Ind-26
13	Treadwell, Laquon	WR	6-2	215	10	Ole Miss	FA-24	D1-Min-16
84	Warren, Tyler	TE	6-6	256	1	Penn State	D1-25	D1-Ind-25
12	Westbrook-Ikhine, N.	WR	6-2	211	6	Indiana	FA-Mia-26	FA-Ten-20

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
60	Bortolini, Tanor	C	6-4	303	2	Wisconsin	D4-24	D4-Ind-24
73	Freeland, Blake	T	6-7	302	3	BYU	D4-23	D4-Ind-23
71	Goncalves, Matt	G	6-6	317	2	Pitt	D3-24	D3-Ind-24
69	Henderson, LaDarius	G	6-4	309	1	Michigan	FA-25	D7-Hou-24
78	Matos, Bayron	T	6-7	334	1	South Florida	FA-25	FA-Mia-24
65	Morrissey, Jimmy	C	6-4	305	3	Pitt	FA-25	D7-LV-21
56	Nelson, Quenton	G	6-5	330	8	Notre Dame	D1-18	D1-Ind-18
79	Raimann, Bernhard	T	6-6	303	4	Central Michigan	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
66	Sills, Josh	G	6-6	325	4	Oklahoma State	FA-25	FA-Phi-22
67	Tenuta, Luke	T	6-8	314	3	Virginia Tech	FA-25	D6-Buf-22
75	Travis, Jalen	T	6-8	339	1	Iowa State	D4-25	D4-Ind-25
68	Tucker, Dalton	G	6-6	307	2	Marshall	FA-24	FA-Ind-24
76	Wilson, Jack	T	6-11	310	1	Washington State	FA-25	FA-Ind-24

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95	Adebawore, Ad.	DT	6-2	282	3	Northwestern	D4-23	D4-Ind-23
99	Buckner, DeForest	DT	6-7	295	10	Oregon	T-SF-20	D1a-SF-16
72	Clemons, Micheal	DE	6-5	263	4	Texas A&M	FA-NYJ-26	D4b-NYJ-22
98	Key, Arden	DE	6-5	240	8	LSU	FA-Ten-26	D3b-LV-18
97	Latu, Laiatu	DE	6-5	265	2	UCLA	D1-24	D1-Ind-24
74	Nchami, Durell	DE	6-4	258	2	Maryland	FA-24	FA-Den-24
92	Nnadi, Derrick	DT	6-1	317	7	Florida State	FA-KC-26	D3a-KC-18
93	Smith, Tim	DT	6-4	302	1	Alabama	FA-25	D6-Ind-25
90	Stewart, Grover	DT	6-4	314	9	Albany State	D4-17	D4-Ind-17
94	Tillery, Jerry	DT	6-6	295	7	Notre Dame	FA-KC-26	D1-LV-19
91	Tuimoloau, Jaylahn	DE	6-4	264	1	Ohio State	D2-25	D2-Ind-25
96	Wooden, Colby	DL	6-4	273	3	Auburn	T-GB-26	D4-GB-23

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
58	Ajiake, Austin	LB	6-1	223	2	UNLV	FA-23	FA-Den-23
59	Bullock, John	LB	6-0	230	1	Nebraska	W-TB-26	FA-TB-25
57	Carlies, Jaylon	LB	6-3	227	2	Missouri	D5-24	D5-Ind-24
51	Davis-Gaither, Akeem	LB	6-2	238	6	Appalachian State	FA-Ari-26	D4-Cin-20
48	Veresuk, Devin	LB	6-2	240	1	Windsor	FA-26	FA-Ind-26

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
29	Blackmon, Mekhi	CB	5-11	178	3	USC	T-Min-25	D3b-Min-23
0	Bynum, Cam	S	6-0	200	5	Cal	FA-Min-25	D4b-Min-21
39	Carter Jr., Rob	CB	5-10	175	1	Robert Morris	FA-26	FA-Ind-26
35	Edwards, Johnathan	CB	6-1	201	1	Tulane	FA-25	FA-Ind-25
42	Ekeler, Wyett	CB	5-11	210	1	Wyoming	FA-25	FA-Ind-25
1	Gardner, Sauce	CB	6-3	190	4	Cincinnati	T-NYJ-25	D1a-NYJ-22
40	Jones, Jaylon	CB	6-2	203	3	Texas A&M	D7-23	D7-Ind-23
36	Lowery III, Reuben	S	5-9	204	1	Chattanooga	W-Bal-25	FA-Bal-25
43	Mitchell, Cameron	CB	5-11	191	3	Northwestern	FA-25	D5-Cle-23
34	Nikkel, Ben	S	6-1	210	1	Iowa State	FA-25	FA-Was-24
38	Owens, Jonathan	S	5-11	204	7	Missouri Western	FA-Chi-26	FA-Ari-18
32	Scott, Daniel	S	6-1	208	3	Cal	D5-23	D5-Ind-23
26	Taylor-Britt, Cam	CB	5-11	200	4	Nebraska	FA-Cin-26	D2-Cin-22
33	Thomas, Juanyeh	S	6-1	215	3	Georgia Tech	FA-Dal-26	FA-Dal-22
27	Walley, Justin	CB	5-10	190	1	Minnesota	D3-25	D3-Ind-25
7	Ward, Charvarius	CB	6-1	196	8	Middle Tennessee	FA-SF-25	FA-Dal-18
41	Washington, Trey	S	5-10	205	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Ind-25
30	Wohler, Hunter	S	6-2	213	1	Wisconsin	D7-25	D7-Ind-25

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Grupe, Blake	K	5-7	156	3	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-NO-23
46	Rhodes, Luke	LS	6-2	238	10	William & Mary	FA-16	FA-TB-16
8	Sanchez, Rigoberto	P	6-0	195	9	Hawai'i	FA-17	FA-Ind-17
3	Shrader, Spencer	K	6-2	201	2	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-Ind-24

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Alec Pierce	16	Ashton Dulin
WR	12	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine		Deion Burks (R)
WR	2	Josh Downs	6	Anthony Gould
LT	79	Bernhard Raimann	73	Blake Freeland
LG	56	Quenton Nelson	68	Dalton Tucker
C	60	Tanor Bortolini	65	Jimmy Morrissey
RG	71	Matt Goncalves		Jalen Farmer (R)
RT	75	Jalen Travis	67	Luke Tenuta
TE	84	Tyler Warren	81	Mo Alie-Cox
QB	17	Daniel Jones	15	Riley Leonard
RB	28	Jonathan Taylor	21	DJ Giddens

DEFENSE

DE	98	Arden Key	91	Jaylahn Tuimoloau
DT	90	Grover Stewart	96	Colby Wooden
DT	99	DeForest Buckner	95	Adetomiwa Adebawore
DE	97	Laiatu Latu	72	Micheal Clemons
MLB		CJ Allen (R)		Bryce Boettcher (R)
WLB	51	Akeem Davis-Gaither	58	Austin Ajiake
CB	7	Charvarius Ward	29	Mekhi Blackmon
CB	1	Sauce Gardner	26	Cam Taylor-Britt
NB	27	Justin Walley	43	Cameron Mitchell
SS		A.J. Haulcy (R)	30	Hunter Wohler
FS	0	Cam Bynum	33	Juanyeh Thomas

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Spencer Shrader	KR	6	Anthony Gould
P	8	Rigoberto Sanchez	PR	6	Anthony Gould

19.1 Alec Pierce had the highest air yards per target among qualifying receivers at 19.1, 1.5 yards higher than second-place Christian Watson.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	CJ Allen	ILB	6-1	230	Georgia
3	A.J. Haulcy	S	5-11	215	LSU
4	Jalen Farmer	G	6-4	312	Kentucky
4	Bryce Boettcher	ILB	6-1	230	Oregon
5	George Gumbs Jr.	Edge	6-4	245	Florida
6	Caden Curry	Edge	6-2	257	Ohio State
7	Seth McGowan	RB	6-0	223	Kentucky
7	Deion Burks	WR	5-9	180	Oklahoma

CJ Allen will be thrust into the middle at camp in hopes that he's the capable heir apparent to the departed Zaire Franklin. He doesn't have Franklin's size but is quicker and an adept blitzer. A.J. Haulcy also has a legitimate chance to start right away, although the safety room is crowded. Jalen Farmer will be groomed as a backup to be an eventual starter. George Gumbs Jr. and Caden Curry are project edge rushers who excelled in college but likely need time to develop. Gumbs had so-so college stats, but the Colts like his upside. Curry had a strong senior season to boost his stock. Seth McGowan will get a look for backup snaps. Deion Burks should get preseason playing time as a backup slot receiver.

JAGUARS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	AT DENVER	4:05
SEPT. 27	**NEW ENGLAND**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	AT CINCINNATI	1:00
OCT. 11	**PHILADELPHIA (LONDON)**	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 18	**HOUSTON (LONDON)**	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 25	BYE	
NOV. 1	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
NOV. 5	AT BALTIMORE	8:15
NOV. 15	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
NOV. 22	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
NOV. 29	**TENNESSEE**	**4:05**
DEC. 6	AT CHICAGO	1:00
DEC. 14	**PITTSBURGH**	**8:15**
DEC. 20	AT HOUSTON	1:00
DEC. 27	AT DALLAS	8:20
TBD	**WASHINGTON**	
TBD	AT INDIANAPOLIS	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	3
2022 AFC PLAYOFFS	9
2023	9
2024	4
2025 AFC PLAYOFFS	13

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **LIAM COEN**
Record With Team: **13-4**
Career Record: **13-4**
Offensive Coordinator: **GRANT UDINSKI**
Defensive Coordinator: **ANTHONY CAMPANILE**
Special Teams Coordinator: **HEATH FARWELL**
Quarterbacks: **SPENCER WHIPPLE**
Running Backs: **CHAD MORTON**
Run Game Coordinator: **BRIAN PICUCCI**
Pass Game Coordinator: **SHANE WALDRON**
Wide Receivers: **EDGAR BENNETT**
Tight Ends: **RICHARD ANGULO**
Offensive Line: **SHAUN SARRETT**
Defensive Line: **MATT EDWARDS**
Linebackers: **TEM LUKABU**
Defensive Backs: **ANTHONY PERKINS**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: **MATHIEU ARAUJO**

The improvement was dramatic, historic and encouraging. Now, the objective for the Jaguars is to improve yet again and develop into something they haven't been in more than two and a half decades — a consistent playoff contender. That's an attainable goal as the Jags move into Year 2 under head coach Liam Coen, general manager James Gladstone and executive vice president of football operations Tony Boselli.

The prospects for continued progress center around Coen — one of the NFL's brightest young head coaches and offensive minds — and the development of quarterback Trevor Lawrence, who through five NFL seasons has emerged as one of the league's best players at his position. In 2025, Coen became the first rookie NFL head coach to win 12 games or more after inheriting a team that won four or fewer games the previous season.

The Jaguars' challenge in 2026: Put 2025 in the past, navigate a first-place schedule and follow one playoff season with another, something they haven't done since making the playoffs in four straight seasons (1996-99).

OFFENSE

This side of the ball is a strength, with the potential to get stronger. Lawrence has emerged as one of the NFL's most rapidly improving franchise quarterbacks entering his sixth season as a starter. He and the rest of a solid offensive core should be even more comfortable entering a second season in Coen's scheme.

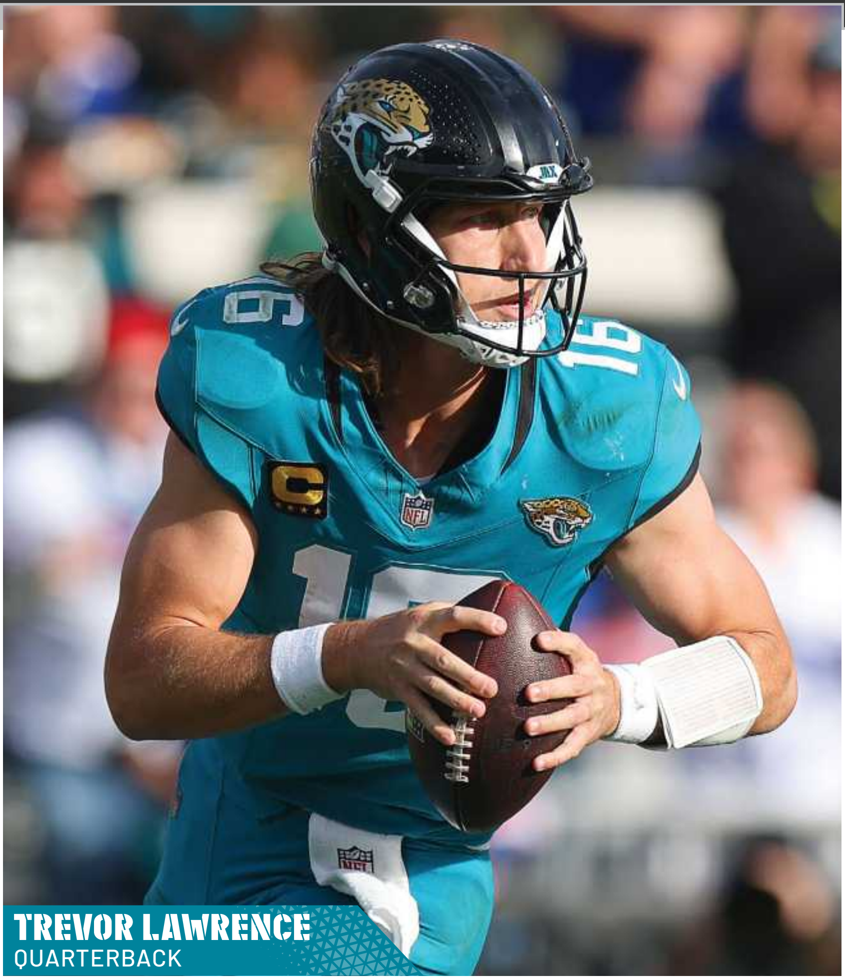
Pre-snap reads and getting the offense into the correct play are critical in Coen's "kill-and-change-at-the-line" scheme. Lawrence improved quickly in that area in 2025, and his continued development could determine how much the offense will ascend in 2026.

Wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter, the No. 2 overall selection in the 2025 NFL Draft, is expected to play a smaller role offensively after missing the final 10 games of his rookie season with a knee injury. His explosiveness should make the Jaguars more difficult to defend from sideline to sideline, though the specifics of the 2024 Heisman Trophy winner's offensive role remain uncertain.

The Jaguars' receivers are a team strength, with Jakobi Meyers, Parker Washington and Brian Thomas Jr. all finishing with more than 700 receiving yards in 2025 (352 of Meyers' yards came with the Las Vegas Raiders). Brenton Strange emerged at the tight end position, with his physicality setting a tone offensively as a receiver and blocker. Tight end will be a key storyline for the Jaguars offensively, with the team selecting two in the 2026 NFL Draft — Nate Boerkircher in Round 2 and Tanner Koziol in Round 5 — with the idea of using more multiple-tight end sets moving forward.

A major objective for the Jaguars is improving a run game that was explosive in 2025 but must be more consistent — and better in short-yardage situations. Running back Chris Rodriguez Jr., effective at yards above expectation, signed as a restricted free agent from the Washington Commanders. He will be key in that area, and he could form a strong backfield committee with second-year running backs Bhayshul Tuten and LeQuint Allen Jr.

The Jaguars return eight offensive linemen with NFL starting experience, with left tackle Cole Van Lanen emerging as a starter late in the season on a unit that helped establish the Jaguars as one of the NFL's most physical teams in 2025. A position to watch: right guard, where Wyatt Milum — a third-round selection in the 2025 NFL Draft — could push 2025 starter Patrick Mekari.



TREVOR LAWRENCE
QUARTERBACK

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

DEFENSE

The Jaguars featured the NFL's top run defense in 2025, and they were one of the NFL's best teams at creating turnovers. The major question entering 2026 is whether an already good pass rush can improve enough to make the defense elite.

The elements are there for the unit to remain strong. Nose tackle DaVon Hamilton is an elite interior run defenders, with Foyesade Oluokun one of the league's most consistent middle linebackers. Defensive end Travon Walker may be the league's best edge run defender, with defensive end Josh Hines-Allen strong in that department, too.

Walker and Hines-Allen have been good at rushing the passer from the outside, but the team must find a better and more consistent interior pass rush to increase sack numbers and help close out games. Expect Walker to move inside in passing situations at times to address this deficiency.

While All-Pro linebacker Devin Lloyd signed with the Carolina Panthers in free agency, his replacement outside — Ventrell Miller — was a co-starter entering 2025, and the team feels that he can fill the role without a drop-off.

The secondary also is a major area to watch entering '26. While the Jaguars registered 22 interceptions in 2025 — up from six the previous season — the defense allowed some critical deep plays in big games, particularly in a wild-card loss to the Buffalo Bills.

Improvement on the back end could come from two second-year veterans, most notably Hunter, who has All-Pro tools as an outside corner and is expected to play a full-time role there. Safety Caleb Ransaw, a third-round selection in the 2025 NFL Draft, is expected to push to start after missing his rookie season with a foot injury.

Safety Antonio Johnson flourished as a run defender and in coverage in a breakout season in 2025, tying with Lloyd for the team lead with five interceptions.

He and Ransaw, along with veteran Eric Murray, figure to play key roles in a Jaguars system that emphasizes multiple safety packages.

Also key in the secondary: Montaric Brown, who emerged in 2025 as a solid corner opposite Hunter. Veteran nickel Jourdan Lewis, a leader with a knack for the ball who missed the postseason with a foot injury, is also expected to return to what on paper could be a vastly improved unit.

SPECIALISTS

The Jaguars have been as strong as any team in the NFL on special teams, and they figure to remain so. Third-year placekicker Cam Little is one of the NFL's best long-distance kickers, turning in the two longest field goals in NFL history last season — 68 and 67 yards, respectively — and gives the Jaguars a chance to score anytime the offense moves past the 50. Logan Cooke, a Pro Bowl selection following the 2024 season, remains among the NFL's best and most consistent punters with a strong combination of distance and ability to pin opponents inside the 20. Long-snapper Ross Matiscik has made the Pro Bowl each of the past three seasons.

Washington, who emerged as one of the team's top receivers in 2025, was also among the NFL's most dangerous punt returners, with a 13.6-yard average and two returned for touchdowns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

This feels like a franchise on the rise, and 2026 could determine if it has a place in the NFL's upper echelon. The Jaguars figure to contend for a second consecutive AFC South title, and with Lawrence ascending into the NFL's elite, they have the ability to mount an extended run as contenders. Whether they can make a second consecutive playoff appearance and a deeper run in the postseason could depend on their ability to rush the passer in critical situations and to make the desired improvements in the running game. A play or two in the postseason determined the Jaguars' fate in 2025. That easily could be the case again.

2025 RESULTS (13-4)

Sept. 7	**CAROLINA**	**W**	**26-10**
Sept. 14	at Cincinnati	L	27-31
Sept. 21	**HOUSTON**	**W**	**17-10**
Sept. 28	**AT SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**26-21**
Oct. 6	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**31-28**
Oct. 12	Seattle	L	12-20
Oct. 19	L.A. Rams	L	7-35
Nov. 2	**AT LAS VEGAS (OT)**	**W**	**30-29**
Nov. 9	at Houston	L	29-36
Nov. 16	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**35-6**
Nov. 23	**AT ARIZONA (OT)**	**W**	**27-24**
Nov. 30	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**25-3**
Dec. 7	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**36-19**
Dec. 14	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**48-20**
Dec. 21	**AT DENVER**	**W**	**34-20**
Dec. 28	**AT INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**23-17**
Jan. 4	**TENNESSEE**	**W**	**41-7**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	Buffalo	L	24-27

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	337.4	11	5
RUSHING	115.1	20	10
PASSING	222.3	12	5
SCORING	27.9	6	3
THIRD DOWN %	39.2	19	9
POINTS/PLAY	0.434	7	4

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	303.6	11	8
RUSHING	85.6	1	1
PASSING	218.1	21	11
SCORING	19.8	8	5
INTERCEPTIONS	22	2	1
SACKS	32	27	14
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.331	T7	T4
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+13	3	2

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
TREVOR LAWRENCE	560	341	4,007	29	12

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
TRAVIS ETIENNE JR.	260	1,107	4.3	7
TREVOR LAWRENCE	82	359	4.4	9
BHAYSHUL TUTEN	83	307	3.7	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
PARKER WASHINGTON	58	847	14.6	5
BRIAN THOMAS JR.	48	707	14.7	2
BRENTON STRANGE	46	540	11.7	3
JAKOBI MEYERS	42	483	11.5	3
TRAVIS ETIENNE JR.	36	292	8.1	6

KICKING: Cam Little, 30-34 FGs, 50-51 PATs, 140 points
TACKLES: Foyesade Oluokun, 143; Andrew Wingard, 84
SACKS: Josh Hines-Allen, 8.0; Arik Armstead, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Antonio Johnson, 5; Devin Lloyd, 5

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HOME, SWEET HOME The Jaguars are getting an upgraded home, but that won't happen for two more seasons. They will play home games at EverBank Stadium at reduced capacity — 42,507 — in 2026 and home games at Camping World Stadium in Orlando in 2027. They are scheduled to begin play at their renovated stadium of the future in downtown Jacksonville in 2028.

SQUATTER'S RIGHTS Jaguars rookie wide receiver **Josh Cameron** will enter the league as one of the NFL's strongest players at his position, having squatted 528 pounds while in college. "I can understand how he's able to do that when he's got five guys on his back and he's still standing," Jaguars general manager James Gladstone says. "That's not all that surprising. He is an impressive human being."

JACOB MUSSELMAN-IMAGN IMAGES

FAMILY GUY Jaguars defensive coordinator Anthony Campanile is a rising star and likely a future NFL head coach. When he completes that journey, it will be the latest step in a remarkable family coaching story. Campanile's father, Mike, coached at Paramus (N.J.) Catholic High School and is legendary in the New Jersey high school football community. His three brothers are also coaches: Nunzio (offensive coordinator, UConn), Vito (head coach, Bergen Catholic High School), Nicky (head coach, DePaul Catholic High School).

WALKING TALL Four of the Jaguars' 10 draft selections this year began their collegiate careers as walk-ons: Texas A&M tight end Nate Boerkircher (Round 2, No. 56 overall), Baylor wide receiver Josh Cameron (Round 6, No. 191 overall), Washington edge Zach Durfee (Round 7, No. 233 overall) and Middle Tennessee linebacker Parker Hughes (Round 7, No. 240 overall). "You've got to love it," Gladstone says. "That is a part to me that says a lot."

SCOUTING THE JAGUARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP JACKSONVILLE

"Liam Coen's strategy and leadership are all on the plus side. … Not sure yet about James Gladstone as a GM. … Brian Thomas Jr. lacks consistent hands. … The trade for Jakobi Meyers was necessary and smart. … Parker Washington is an underrated presence. … Not really seeing the wisdom of a two-way player in Travis Hunter. They need to plug him in at corner and keep him there. … Offensive line isn't great. … I like the blocking of tight ends Brenton Strange and Nate Boerkircher. … I think they'll regret not re-signing Travis Etienne Jr. … The speed of Bhayshul Tuten is elite, but he's not much of a tackle-breaker. … Trevor Lawrence is accurate, mobile and makes sound decisions. He's a winning quarterback with a lot of good football in front of him. … Hard to see the Jaguars not going the plug-and-play route with Emmanuel Pregnon. … Travon Walker earned that big deal. … Arik Armstead has it all: size, length and power. … Josh Hines-Allen is one of the most efficient pass-rushers in the league. … Albert Regis was overdrafted, in my opinion. … Every year, Foyesade Oluokun gets the job done in every facet of the game. … On defense, Hunter's skill set and athleticism translate better. … Jourdan Lewis is an underrated nickelback. … Eric Murray's range, hands and tackling are all assets to this defense. … Special teams are superior for the Jaguars. There's a lot to like about their kicking game and returners."

2026 JAGUARS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Bradley, Carter	QB	6-3	221	1	South Alabama	FA-25	FA-LV-24
16 Lawrence, Trevor	QB	6-6	220	5	Clemson	D1a-21	D1a-Jac-21
14 Mullens, Nick	QB	6-0	210	7	Southern Miss	FA-Min-25	FA-SF-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43 Abdullah, Ameer	RB	5-9	203	11	Nebraska	FA-Ind-26	D2-Det-15
5 Allen Jr., LeQuint	RB	6-0	201	1	Syracuse	D7b-25	D7b-Jac-25
20 Dallas, DeeJay	RB	5-10	225	6	Miami (Fla.)	PS-Car-25	D4-Sea-20
24 Rodriguez Jr., Chris	RB	5-11	224	3	Kentucky	FA-Was-26	D6-Was-23
33 Tuten, Bhayshul	RB	5-9	209	1	Virginia Tech	D4a-25	D4a-Jac-25

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Brayboy, Chandler	WR	6-1	199	1	Elon	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
88 Herbert, Patrick	TE	6-5	255	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
13 Jones, Tim	WR	6-1	200	5	Southern Miss	FA-25	FA-Jac-21
84 Long, Hunter	TE	6-5	243	5	Boston College	FA-LAR-25	D3-Mia-21
3 Meyers, Jakobi	WR	6-2	200	7	NC State	T-LV-25	FA-NE-19
80 Morris, Quintin	TE	6-2	243	4	Bowling Green	FA-Buf-25	FA-Buf-21
85 Strange, Brenton	TE	6-4	253	3	Penn State	D2-23	D2-Jac-23
7 Thomas Jr., Brian	WR	6-2	209	2	LSU	D1-24	D1-Jac-24
81 Trammell, Austin	WR	5-10	185	4	Rice	FA-24	FA-Atl-21
11 Washington, Parker	WR	5-10	204	3	Penn State	D6a-23	D6a-Jac-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
79 Carvin, Jerome	OL	6-5	307	1	Tennessee	FA-25	FA-KC-23
76 Cleveland, Ezra	OL	6-6	312	6	Boise State	T-Min-23	D2-Min-20
55 Edoga, Chuma	OL	6-4	315	7	USC	FA-Dal-25	D3b-NYJ-19
73 Hainsey, Robert	OL	6-4	306	5	Notre Dame	FA-TB-25	D3-TB-21
77 Harrison, Anton	OL	6-4	315	3	Oklahoma	D1-23	D1-Jac-23
66 Lee, Ricky	OL	6-6	305	2	North Carolina A&T	FA-25	FA-Car-23
72 Little, Walker	OL	6-7	325	5	Stanford	D2-21	D2-Jac-21
65 Mekari, Patrick	OL	6-4	305	7	Cal	FA-Bal-25	FA-Bal-19
64 Milum, Wyatt	OL	6-6	317	1	West Virginia	D3b-25	D3b-Jac-25
60 Monheim, Jonah	OL	6-5	310	1	USC	D7a-25	D7a-Jac-25
70 Van Lanen, Cole	OL	6-5	312	5	Wisconsin	T-GB-22	D6a-GB-21
61 Wormley, Sal	OL	6-3	327	1	Penn State	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
78 Zierer, Kilian	OL	6-7	312	1	Auburn	FA-25	FA-Hou-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
91 Armstead, Arik	DT	6-7	290	11	Oregon	FA-SF-24	D1-SF-15
93 Dickerson, Matt	DL	6-5	300	6	UCLA	FA-25	FA-Ten-18
95 Green II, B.J.	DL	6-1	270	1	Colorado	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
52 Hamilton, DaVon	DT	6-4	335	6	Ohio State	D3-20	D3-Jac-20
41 Hines-Allen, Josh	DE	6-5	255	7	Kentucky	D1-19	D1-Jac-19
99 Orhorhoro, Ruke	DL	6-4	295	2	Clemson	T-Atl-26	D2-Atl-24
97 Rose, Keivie	DL	6-3	314	1	Arkansas	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
92 Striggow, Danny	DL	6-5	255	1	Minnesota	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
44 Walker, Travon	DE	6-5	272	4	Georgia	D1a-22	D1a-Jac-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Abdullah, Yasir	LB	6-1	240	3	Louisville	D5a-23	D5a-Jac-23
50 Combs, Branson	LB	6-3	228	1	Wake Forest	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
47 Gardeck, Dennis	LB	6-0	232	8	Sioux Falls	FA-25	FA-Ari-18
54 Kiser, Jack	LB	6-2	231	1	Notre Dame	D4b-25	D4b-Jac-25
35 McLeod, Jalen	LB	6-1	236	1	Auburn	D6a-25	D6a-Jac-25
51 Miller, Ventrell	LB	6-0	232	3	Florida	D4-23	D4-Jac-23
23 Oluokun, Foyesade	LB	6-2	230	8	Yale	FA-Atl-22	D6b-Atl-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21 Braswell, Christian	CB	5-11	185	2	Rutgers	D6b-23	D6b-Jac-23
1 Brown, Montaric	CB	6-0	190	4	Arkansas	D7-22	D7-Jac-22
12 Hunter, Travis	CB	6-1	185	1	Colorado	D1-25	D1-Jac-25
6 Johnson, Antonio	S	6-2	198	3	Texas A&M	D5b-23	D5b-Jac-23
4 Jones, Jarrian	CB	5-11	190	2	Florida State	D3-24	D3-Jac-24
25 Lane III, Rayuan	DB	5-11	197	1	Navy	D6b-25	D6b-Jac-25
2 Lewis, Jourdan	CB	5-10	190	9	Michigan	FA-Dal-25	D3-Dal-17
31 Lovely, Keni-H	CB	5-11	175	1	Western Michigan	FA-25	FA-Buf-24
37 Muhammad, Jabbar	DB	5-10	185	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
29 Murray, Eric	S	5-11	199	10	Minnesota	FA-Hou-25	D4b-KC-16
27 Ransaw, Caleb	DB	6-0	196	1	Tulane	D3a-25	D3a-Jac-25
42 Silmon-Craig, Cam'Ron	DB	5-10	185	1	Colorado	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
32 Taylor, Keith	CB	6-3	195	4	Washington	FA-25	D5-Car-21
34 Thomas, Trevian	S	5-11	196	1	Arkansas State	FA-25	FA-Jac-25

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Cooke, Logan	P	6-5	230	8	Mississippi State	D7b-18	D7b-Jac-18
39 Little, Cam	K	6-1	172	2	Arkansas	D6-24	D6-Jac-24
46 Matiscik, Ross	LS	6-0	240	6	Baylor	FA-20	FA-Jac-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	11	Parker Washington	12	Travis Hunter
WR	7	Brian Thomas Jr.	19	Josh Cameron (R)
WR	3	Jakobi Meyers	18	CJ Williams (R)
LT	70	Cole Van Lanen	72	Walker Little
LG	76	Ezra Cleveland	75	Emmanuel Pregnon (R)
C	73	Robert Hainsey	60	Jonah Monheim
RG	65	Patrick Mekari	64	Wyatt Milum
RT	77	Anton Harrison	55	Chuma Edoga
TE	85	Brenton Strange	87	Nate Boerkircher (R)
QB	16	Trevor Lawrence	14	Nick Mullens
RB	33	Bhayshul Tuten	24	Chris Rodriguez Jr.

DEFENSE

DE	44	Travon Walker	92	Danny Striggow
DT	52	DaVon Hamilton	98	Albert Regis (R)
DT	91	Arik Armstead	99	Ruke Ohorhoro
DE	41	Josh Hines-Allen	90	Wesley Williams (R)
LB	23	Foyesade Oluokun	54	Jack Kiser
LB	51	Ventrell Miller	50	Branson Combs
CB	12	Travis Hunter	21	Christian Braswell
CB	1	Montaric Brown	32	Keith Taylor
NB	2	Jourdan Lewis	4	Jarrian Jones
S	27	Caleb Ransaw	6	Antonio Johnson
S	29	Eric Murray	25	Rayuan Lane III

SPECIALISTS

K	39	Cam Little	PR	11	Parker Washington
P	9	Logan Cooke	KR	33	Bhayshul Tuten

85.6 The Jaguars allowed a league-low 85.6 rushing yards per game in 2025.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: D

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	Nate Boerkircher	TE	6-5	245	Texas A&M
3	Albert Regis	DT	6-1	295	Texas A&M
3	Emmanuel Pregnon	OL	6-4	314	Oregon
3	Jalen Huskey	S	6-1	196	Maryland
4	Wesley Williams	DE	6-3	256	Duke
5	Tanner Koziol	TE	6-7	250	Houston
6	Josh Cameron	WR	6-1	224	Baylor
6	CJ Williams	WR	6-1	205	Stanford
7	Zach Durfee	DE	6-5	258	Washington
7	Parker Hughes	LB	6-1	228	Middle Tennessee

Instead of aggressively reaching for need early, the Jaguars stayed patient in the draft — reshaping their tight end position while focusing on the lines and finding contributors who can develop. They selected Nate Boerkircher and Tanner Koziol — the first time in franchise history they have selected two tight ends in the same draft — with the idea of using more two- and three-tight end formations. Albert Regis is an athletic defensive tackle who adds depth at the position, with Jalen Huskey (11 career collegiate interceptions) joining a secondary that helped the Jaguars finish second in the NFL with 31 takeaways in 2025. Wesley Williams will compete for snaps on the edge behind veterans Travon Walker and Josh Hines-Allen, with the two sixth-round receivers — Josh Cameron and CJ Williams — figuring to add depth to the receiver corps.

TITANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST
4

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	**PHILADELPHIA**	**1:00**
SEPT. 27	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
OCT. 4	AT BALTIMORE	1:00
OCT. 11	**HOUSTON**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
OCT. 25	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	AT CINCINNATI	1:00
NOV. 8	BYE	
NOV. 15	**JACKSONVILLE**	
NOV. 22	AT DALLAS	1:00
NOV. 29	AT JACKSONVILLE	4:05
DEC. 6	**WASHINGTON**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT DETROIT	1:00
DEC. 20	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
DEC. 27	AT LAS VEGAS	4:05
JAN. 3	**PITTSBURGH**	**1:00**
TBD	AT HOUSTON	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 AFC PLAYOFFS	12
2022	7
2023	6
2024	3
2025	3

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **ROBERT SALEH**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **20-36**
Offensive Coordinator: **BRIAN DABOLL**
Defensive Coordinator: **GUS BRADLEY**
Special Teams: **JOHN FASSEL**
Quarterbacks: **SHEA TIERNEY**
Running Backs: **RANDY JORDAN**
Wide Receivers: **GREG LEWIS**
Tight Ends: **LUKE STOCKER**
Offensive Line: **CARMEN BRICILLO**
Defensive Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: **AARON WHITECOTTON**
Linebackers: **DAVE BORGONZI**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/Cornerbacks: **TONY ODEN**
Defensive Backs/Safeties: **MARQUAND MANUEL**
Defensive Backs/Nickels: **DALTON HILLIARD**

Coming off back-to-back 3-14 seasons, the Tennessee Titans, as usual, made changes. For the fourth straight season, a new head coach and/or general manager is on the scene.

This year's newcomer is former New York Jets head coach Robert Saleh, who hopes to restore some discipline, focus and aggressiveness to a team that has had very few positives during a four-year run in which they have won only 19 games total for three different coaches and three different general managers.

Unlike former head coach Brian Callahan's coaching staff, which featured first-time coordinators and play-callers across the board, Saleh's staff brings a wealth of experience.

Saleh, who will call the defense, is in his second go-round as a head coach. He is turning the offense over to former New York Giants head coach Brian Daboll. Saleh will get help on defense from one-time Jacksonville Jaguars head coach Gus Bradley, and well-respected special teams coach Jim Fassel, who joined the club last year, rounds out the Titans' coordinators.

On paper, the staff certainly appears to be an upgrade. They'll try to turn a roster with lots of new faces into a cohesive unit that can at least be more competitive than the previous few seasons.

General manager Mike Borgonzi has made sweeping changes in an effort to rebuild the team and accommodate Saleh and his staff. On defense, the Titans imported a number of veteran players, many with past ties to Saleh. Offensively, the Titans are going with a more organic approach, spending 11 of their 17 draft picks over the past two years on that side of the ball, including last year's No. 1 overall pick in quarterback Cam Ward and this year's No. 4 overall pick in wide receiver Carnell Tate.

OFFENSE

The Titans' offense figures to go as Ward goes, and the hope is that Daboll can mold the young offense into a cohesive unit around him. Ward got off to a slow start as a rookie but showed improvement late last season. He completed only 59.8% of his passes, but he threw for 3,169 yards and 15 touchdowns to only seven interceptions. Ward needs to begin to show that he can elevate not only his play, but also the players around him.

Tony Pollard figures to be the Titans' lead back once again. He isn't as explosive as he once was, but he still posted his fourth straight 1,000-yard season, rushing for a career-high 1,082 yards. His caddy, Tyjae Spears, figures to get a challenge from rookie Nicholas Singleton for playing time. Spears' injury history and Singleton's size-speed combination could open the door for the rookie.

One area that needs improvement is the receiver room, and the Titans turned some heads by taking Ohio State's Tate with the fourth overall pick — the highest pick that the franchise has spent on a receiver since 1965. The team is counting on Tate to deliver playmaking ability as a downfield threat with strong hands.

The Titans signed slot receiver Wan'Dale Robinson in free agency, and Calvin Ridley returns from injury. Second-year player Chimere Dike is electric as a returner, but he needs to unlock some of that on offense. Elic Ayomanor's reps might decrease with Tate and Robinson now in the fold. Second-year tight end Gunnar Helm replaces the departed Chig Okonkwo as the best option at that position.

CAM WARD
QUARTERBACK

DONALD PAGE/TENNESSEE TITANS

The offensive line has been a trouble spot for the Titans for at least the past four years. Entering 2026, the unit still has question marks, even with former first-round picks Peter Skoronski and JC Latham. Center and right guard will be camp position battles among veteran free agents, holdovers and rookies. Left tackle Dan Moore Jr. struggles against top pass-rushers, and Latham needs more consistency at right tackle.

DEFENSE

At the end of the 2025 season, the Titans' defense seemed basically to be Jeffery Simmons and a bunch of no-names. Simmons had the best year of his career with 11 sacks, as the Titans resisted all overtures to trade him at the deadline, but it was beyond obvious that he needed help if this unit was going to improve in 2026.

Enter Saleh, a defensive-minded head coach who persuaded Borgonzi to bring in a host of players who have played for him previously. The migration to Tennessee began at the NFL Scouting Combine with the acquisition of Jermaine Johnson II from the New York Jets in a trade for T'Vondre Sweat and continued with the arrival of Saleh expatriates John Franklin-Myers, Solomon Thomas, Jordan Elliott, Jacob Martin and Tony Adams. Franklin-Myers and Johnson can have an impact, while the rest figure to be role players in a deep rotation in Saleh's new 4-3. Throw in rookies Keldric Faulk (end) and Anthony Hill (linebacker), and the Titans have hopes that their defense can carry the load at the outset of the Saleh era.

In the secondary, the Titans added three cornerbacks in Alontae Taylor, Cor'Dale Flott and Joshua Williams to a group that was severely lacking a year ago. A change in attitude was probably as necessary as a change in personnel among that group.

The Titans have returnees Amani Hooker and Kevin Winston Jr. at safety and Cedric Gray and Cody Barton at linebacker. The roles for Gray and Barton will differ this year in the move to a 4-3 after the Titans ran a 3-4 look for the past decade.

SPECIALISTS

After years of being a laughingstock, the Titans' special teams made an amazing turnaround last year under Fassel. Dike developed into an All-Pro and a dangerous weapon on both punt and kickoff returns. The Titans even blocked a punt for the first time in 14 seasons when James Williams Sr. accomplished the feat against the Cleveland Browns.

Long-snapper Morgan Cox is as steady as they come, and placekicker Joey Slye, while not the accuracy king that Nick Folk was, has a strong leg and is a threat from 60 yards and beyond with his range. The Titans weren't satisfied with Johnny Hekker's punting, so they replaced him with former Texans punter Tommy Townsend, who should be an upgrade.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Titans need a lot of things to go right in a short amount of time to make the jump from the bottom of the league to playoff contention in 2026.

In terms of where the organization is in its rebuild, baby steps in the right direction this year would be a welcome development in Nashville. Among the things the Titans are hoping for — the development of Ward into a franchise quarterback and the corresponding development of first-round pick Tate into an elite receiver.

Figuring out the offensive line — not just for this season, but beyond — would also help the club both in terms of competitiveness and wins. Last year, the Titans had nine double-digit losses, showing just how non-competitive the team was.

The Titans have optimism that Saleh can work his magic on the defense the way he has done in two different San Francisco stints and with the Jets. If that happens, the Titans, while still a long way from contention, might finally be trending in the right direction.

2025 RESULTS (3-14)

Sept. 7	at Denver	L	12-20
Sept. 14	L.A. Rams	L	19-33
Sept. 21	Indianapolis	L	20-41
Sept. 28	at Houston	L	0-26
Oct. 5	**AT ARIZONA**	**W**	**22-21**
Oct. 12	at Las Vegas	L	10-20
Oct. 19	New England	L	13-31
Oct. 26	at Indianapolis	L	14-38
Nov. 2	L.A. Chargers	L	20-27
Nov. 16	Houston	L	13-16
Nov. 23	Seattle	L	24-30
Nov. 30	Jacksonville	L	3-25
Dec. 7	**AT CLEVELAND**	**W**	**31-29**
Dec. 14	at San Francisco	L	24-37
Dec. 21	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**26-9**
Dec. 28	New Orleans	L	26-34
Jan. 4	at Jacksonville	L	7-41

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	259.6	31	15
RUSHING	93.5	30	15
PASSING	166.1	30	14
SCORING	16.7	30	14
THIRD DOWN %	31.9	31	16
POINTS/PLAY	0.283	30	14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	345.1	21	10
RUSHING	114.6	15	10
PASSING	230.5	23	12
SCORING	28.1	28	14
INTERCEPTIONS	6	T29	15
SACKS	42	T12	6
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.474	31	16
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-5	25	13

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
CAM WARD	540	323	3,169	15	7
BRANDON ALLEN	30	17	72	0	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
TONY POLLARD	242	1,082	4.5	5
TYJAE SPEARS	72	283	3.9	2
CAM WARD	39	159	4.1	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
CHIG OKONKWO	56	560	10.0	2
CHIMERE DIKE	48	423	8.8	4
TYJAE SPEARS	45	264	5.9	0
GUNNAR HELM	44	357	8.1	2
ELIC AYOMANOR	41	515	12.6	4

KICKING: Joey Slye, 28-35 FGs, 26-27 PATs, 110 points **TACKLES:** Cedric Gray, 164; Cody Barton, 81; Amani Hooker, 81; **SACKS:** Jeffery Simmons, 11.0; Jihad Ward, 5.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Cody Barton, 3; Xavier Woods, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS Cam Ward's passing numbers as a rookie were somewhat modest by today's NFL standards, as he threw for 3,169 yards in 17 games. However, that is the most passing yards by a Titans quarterback since Ryan Tannehill had 3,724 yards in 2021 and the most ever by a Titans/Oilers rookie QB in a season.

FAMILIAR FACES Two members of the Titans' rookie class have already known each other for a long time. Both first-round pick **Carnell Tate** of Ohio State and sixth-round pick Pat Coogan of Indiana attended Marist High School on the south side of Chicago. Tate left Marist during COVID-19 and transferred to IMG Academy in Florida.

IMPROVEMENTS ALL AROUND The 2025 season was a dismal one for the Titans in a lot of ways. However, it was a banner year in many ways on special teams. Rookie Chimere Dike earned All-Pro honors as a punt returner. He had the Titans' first punt return TD since Darius Reynaud in 2013 and actually reached the end zone twice on punts. In addition to that, special teams coordinator John Fassel's unit blocked a punt against the Cleveland Browns, the first for the Titans in 14 years.

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

WELCOME HOME One of the Titans' biggest free-agent additions in the offseason is cornerback Alontae Taylor, who left the New Orleans Saints to sign with Tennessee. Taylor, who played at the University of Tennessee, hails from Manchester, Tennessee, and played high school football at Coffee County High School. Taylor's first visit to Nissan Stadium came when he was honored as the Titans High School Football Player of the Week.

SCOUTING THE TITANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TENNESSEE

"Cam Ward has a lot of potential. He's got the arm and the mobility. He just needs much better pass protection to allow his talent to manifest. … Carnell Tate should make Ward's job a lot easier. He's a proven speed guy who easily gets open. … Calvin Ridley hasn't lived up to the big contract. … Wan'Dale Robinson was an expensive but good acquisition. … Dan Moore Jr. has been a disappointment at left tackle. … Peter Skoronski is ready for a new deal. They picked up the fifth-year option, but look for them to get something done with him at some point. … JC Latham has the ability and size, but he hasn't lived up to his draft status. … Not overwhelmed by the tight ends here. … Mitchell Trubisky is a solid backup to Ward. … Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears are a solid running tandem, but I thought they needed to add to the running back position. … John Franklin-Myers' addition should galvanize the front seven. … Jeffery Simmons is a bad man. … Jermaine Johnson II, reunited with Robert Saleh, should thrive in this defense, a base 4-3 scheme. … Look for Keldric Faulk to grow a lot as a rookie. … Saleh's leadership and experience should be a big upgrade. … Mike Borgonzi won the power struggle over Chad Brinker. He's the guy in the front office. … Anthony Hill should be a hit as a rookie starting middle linebacker. … Liking the secondary overall, especially at corner with Alontae Taylor and Cor'Dale Flott. … Special teams is just so-so."

2026 TITANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Hooker, Hendon	QB	6-3	220	3	Tennessee	FA-NYJ-26	D3a-Det-23
8 Levis, Will	QB	6-4	229	3	Kentucky	D2-23	D2-Ten-23
10 Trubisky, Mitchell	QB	6-2	220	9	North Carolina	FA-Buf-26	D1-Chi-17
1 Ward, Cam	QB	6-2	219	1	Miami (Fla.)	D1-25	D1-Ten-25

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35 Carter, Michael	RB	5-8	201	5	North Carolina	FA-Ari-26	D4-NYJ-21
36 Chestnut, Julius	RB	5-11	228	4	Sacred Heart	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
31 Mullings, Kalel	RB	6-2	226	1	Michigan	D6b-25	D6b-Ten-25
20 Pollard, Tony	RB	6-0	209	7	Memphis	FA-Dal-24	D4a-Dal-19
2 Spears, Tyjae	RB	5-11	195	3	Tulane	D3-23	D3-Ten-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Ayomanor, Elic	WR	6-2	206	1	Stanford	D4c-25	D4c-Ten-25
82 Bellinger, Daniel	TE	6-6	255	4	San Diego State	FA-NYG-26	D4a-NYG-22
17 Dike, Chimere	WR	6-1	196	1	Florida	D4a-25	D4a-Ten-25
86 Granson, Kylen	TE	6-3	242	5	SMU	FA-Phi-26	D4-Ind-21
84 Helm, Gunnar	TE	6-5	241	1	Texas	D4b-25	D4b-Ten-25
Jackson, Courtney	WR	5-11	183	1	Arkansas State	FA-NYG-26	FA-Den-25
12 Kinsey, Mason	WR	5-11	200	3	Berry College	FA-21	FA-Ten-20
88 Martin-Robinson, D.	TE	6-3	247	2	Temple	FA-24	FA-Ten-24
89 McCutcheon, Lance	WR	6-3	202	2	Montana State	FA-25	FA-LAR-22
80 Oliver, Bryce	WR	6-1	214	2	Youngstown State	FA-24	FA-Ten-24
85 Osborn, K.J.	WR	5-11	203	6	Miami (Fla.)	FA-26	D5-Min-20
87 Restrepo, Xavier	WR	5-10	202	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	FA-Ten-25
0 Ridley, Calvin	WR	6-1	190	7	Alabama	FA-Jac-24	D1-Atl-18
4 Robinson, Wan'Dale	WR	5-8	185	4	Kentucky	FA-NYG-26	D2-NYG-22
83 Wilson, Joel	TE	6-4	245	1	Central Michigan	FA-25	FA-Buf-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
78 Crenshaw-Dickson, B.	T	6-7	316	1	Florida	FA-25	FA-Ten-25
76 Deculus, Austin	T	6-5	321	3	LSU	FA-LAC-26	D6-Hou-22
71 Dellinger, Garrett	G	6-5	320	1	LSU	W-Cle-25	D7-Bal-25
72 Hayes, Ryan	T	6-6	303	1	Michigan	FA-26	D7-Mia-23
61 Hill, Trey	OL	6-4	310	4	Georgia	FA-26	D6a-Cin-21
55 Latham, JC	T	6-6	342	2	Alabama	D1-24	D1-Ten-24
75 Moore Jr., Dan	T	6-5	315	5	Texas A&M	FA-Pit-25	D4a-Pit-21
67 Moss, Drew	G	6-3	303	1	Colorado State	W-SF-25	FA-SF-25
51 Schlottmann, Austin	OL	6-6	300	7	TCU	FA-NYG-26	FA-Den-18
77 Skoronski, Peter	OL	6-4	313	3	Northwestern	D1-23	D1-Ten-23
64 Slater, Jackson	G	6-3	311	1	Sacramento State	D5-25	D5-Ten-25
73 Volson, Cordell	G	6-6	315	4	North Dakota State	FA-Cin-26	D4-Cin-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
58 Agoha, David Ebuka	DE	6-4	252	1	None	FA-25	FA-LV-23
69 Brown IV, Earnest	DT	6-5	308	4	Northwestern	FA-26	D5-LAR-21
95 Elliott, Jordan	DL	6-4	303	6	Missouri	FA-SF-26	D3a-Cle-20
91 Franklin-Myers, John	DL	6-4	288	8	Stephen F. Austin	FA-Den-26	D4-LAR-18
93 Herring, Malik	DE	6-3	275	5	Georgia	FA-KC-26	FA-KC-21
94 Horne, Timmy	DT	6-4	323	4	Kansas State	FA-25	FA-Atl-22
68 Horsley, Cam	DT	6-3	312	1	Boston College	FA-25	FA-Ten-25
11 Johnson II, Jermaine	DE	6-5	254	4	Florida State	T-NYJ-26	D1c-NYJ-22
57 Martin, Jacob	DE	6-2	242	8	Temple	FA-Was-26	D6-Sea-18
7 Oladejo, Oluwafemi	OLB	6-3	259	1	UCLA	D2-25	D2-Ten-25
91 Ravenell, C.J.	DL	6-5	300	1	Missouri Western	W-Bal-25	FA-Bal-24
98 Simmons, Jeffery	DT	6-4	305	7	Mississippi State	D1-19	D1-Ten-19
90 Thomas, Solomon	DT	6-3	285	9	Stanford	T-Dal-26	D1a-SF-17

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Barton, Cody	LB	6-2	237	7	Utah	FA-Den-25	D3-Sea-19
44 Diabate, Mohamoud	LB	6-4	225	3	Utah	FA-Cle-26	FA-Cle-23
33 Gray, Cedric	LB	6-2	234	2	North Carolina	D4-24	D4-Ten-24
92 Harrell, Jaylen	OLB	6-4	247	2	Michigan	D7b-24	D7b-Ten-24
56 Jones, Truman	OLB	6-3	255	1	Harvard	FA-25	FA-KC-23
54 Mausi, Dorian	LB	6-1	234	1	Auburn	W-Min-25	FA-Min-25
52 Williams Sr., James	LB	6-4	232	2	Miami (Fla.)	D7a-24	D7a-Ten-24

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38 Adams, Tony	S	5-11	203	4	Illinois	FA-NYJ-26	FA-NYJ-22
30 Brooks, Kendell	DB	6-0	206	1	Michigan State	FA-24	FA-Ari-23
29 Calligan, Keydrain	CB	6-0	200	1	SE Louisiana	FA-25	FA-Hou-25
18 Flott, Cor'Dale	CB	6-2	175	4	LSU	FA-NYG-26	D3b-NYG-22
41 Hallett II, Erick	S	5-11	200	1	Pitt	FA-25	D6-Jac-23
26 Harris, Marcus	CB	5-11	188	1	Cal	D6a-25	D6a-Ten-25
37 Hooker, Amani	S	5-11	210	7	Iowa	D4-19	D4-Ten-19
42 Kane, Sanoussi	S	5-11	210	2	Purdue	FA-25	D7-Bal-24
28 Reed II, Jerrick	S	5-9	197	3	New Mexico	W-Sea-25	D6-Sea-23
21 Robinson, Micah	CB	5-11	183	1	Tulane	FA-25	D7-GB-25
24 Taylor, Alontae	CB	6-1	199	4	Tennessee	FA-NO-26	D2-NO-22
25 Williams, Joshua	CB	6-3	193	4	Fayetteville State	FA-KC-26	D4-KC-22
23 Winston Jr., Kevin	S	6-2	213	1	Penn State	D3-25	D3-Ten-25

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	16	Tennessee	FA-Bal-21	FA-Bal-10
6 Slye, Joey	K	5-11	213	7	Virginia Tech	FA-NE-25	FA-NYG-19
3 Townsend, Tommy	P	6-1	191	6	Florida	FA-Hou-26	FA-KC-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Carnell Tate (R)	5	Elic Ayomanor
WR	0	Calvin Ridley	17	Chimere Dike
WR	4	Wan'Dale Robinson	12	Mason Kinsey
LT	75	Dan Moore Jr.	78	Brandon Crenshaw-Dickson
LG	77	Peter Skoronski	64	Jackson Slater
C	51	Austin Schlottmann	79	Pat Coogan (R)
RG	73	Cordell Volson	66	Fernando Carmona (R)
RT	55	JC Latham	76	Austin Deculus
TE	84	Gunnar Helm	82	Daniel Bellinger
QB	1	Cam Ward	10	Mitchell Trubisky
RB	20	Tony Pollard	2	Tyjae Spears

DEFENSE

DE	15	Keldric Faulk (R)	57	Jacob Martin
DT	91	John Franklin-Myers	90	Solomon Thomas
DT	98	Jeffery Simmons	95	Jordan Elliott
DE	11	Jermaine Johnson II	7	Oluwafemi Oladejo
SLB	50	Cody Barton	44	Mohamoud Diabate
MLB	53	Anthony Hill (R)	54	Dorian Mausi
WLB	33	Cedric Gray	52	James Williams Sr.
CB	24	Alontae Taylor	29	Keydrain Calligan
CB	18	Cor'Dale Flott	25	Joshua Williams
NB	26	Marcus Harris	21	Micah Robinson
SS	23	Kevin Winston Jr.	42	Sanoussi Kane
FS	37	Amani Hooker	38	Tony Adams

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Joey Slye	KR	17	Chimere Dike
P	3	Tommy Townsend	PR	17	Chimere Dike

-0.23 Cam Ward averaged minus-0.23 EPA per dropback last year, the worst rate of any qualified quarterback in the league — yes, even J.J. McCarthy.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Carnell Tate	WR	6-2	192	Ohio State
1	Keldric Faulk	DE	6-5	274	Auburn
2	Anthony Hill	LB	6-2	238	Texas
5	Fernando Carmona	G	6-5	316	Arkansas
5	Nicholas Singleton	RB	6-0	219	Penn State
6	Jackie Marshall	DT	6-2	293	Baylor
6	Pat Coogan	C	6-5	310	Indiana
7	Jaren Kanak	TE	6-2	234	Oklahoma

After years of misses, the Titans could use a number of hits in their 2026 draft class. Multiple members of this class will get the chance to contribute right away. Wide receiver Carnell Tate could quickly move to the top of the depth chart. Keldric Faulk figures to be a part of the defensive line rotation, while Anthony Hill pencils in as the middle linebacker and will get the green dot on defense. Even third-day selections like Fernando Carmona and Pat Coogan will be involved in training-camp battles at right guard and center, respectively, while Nicholas Singleton figures to start out competing with Tyjae Spears for carries as the second running back behind Tony Pollard. Jackie Marshall and Jaren Kanak are both developmental projects but could find roles on special teams.

BRONCOS

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 14	AT KANSAS CITY	8:15
SEPT. 20	**JACKSONVILLE**	**4:05**
SEPT. 27	**L.A. RAMS**	**8:20**
OCT. 4	AT SAN FRANCISCO	4:25
OCT. 11	AT L.A. CHARGERS	4:05
OCT. 15	**SEATTLE**	**8:15**
OCT. 25	AT ARIZONA	4:05
NOV. 1	**KANSAS CITY**	**4:25**
NOV. 8	AT CAROLINA	1:00
NOV. 15	BYE	
NOV. 22	**LAS VEGAS**	**4:25**
NOV. 27	AT PITTSBURGH	3:00
DEC. 6	**MIAMI**	**4:05**
DEC. 13	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
DEC. 20	AT LAS VEGAS	4:25
DEC. 25	**BUFFALO**	**4:30**
TBD	AT NEW ENGLAND	
TBD	**L.A. CHARGERS**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	7
2022	5
2023	8
2024 AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2025 AFC PLAYOFFS	14

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **SEAN PAYTON**
Record With Team: **32-19**
Career Record: **184-108**
Offensive Coordinator: **DAVIS WEBB**
Defensive Coordinator: **VANCE JOSEPH**
Special Teams Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach: **DARREN RIZZI**
Offensive Run Game Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach: **ZACH STRIEF**
Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: **JOHN MORTON**
Quarterbacks: **LOGAN KILGORE**
Running Backs: **LOU AYENI**
Wide Receivers: **RONALD CURRY**
Tight Ends: **AUSTIN KING**
Offensive Line: **CHRIS MORGAN**
Defensive Line: **JAMAR CAIN**
Inside Linebackers: **JEFF SCHMEDDING**
Outside Linebackers: **ISAAC SHEWMAKER**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: **ROBERT LIVINGSTON**
Defensive Backs: **DOUG BELK**

AFC WEST FORECAST
1

It is Super Bo or bust. The Broncos are a legitimate contender in the AFC because of Bo Nix. The statistics don't define Nix, even though they are gaudy. The number that best sums up Nix is the one that put him in the record book: His 24 wins rank as the most by a Broncos quarterback, or any team's quarterback, in a starter's first two seasons. Had he not broken his ankle in a playoff victory over Buffalo, the Broncos believe they would have reached the Super Bowl. Now, there is no other acceptable expectation for the team that ended the Kansas City Chiefs' nine-year stranglehold on the AFC West title.

The Broncos gifted Nix a dynamic weapon in receiver Jaylen Waddle, gave him a new play-caller in Davis Webb and otherwise have run it back with the 2025 roster. Entering his fourth season, head coach Sean Payton chose continuity and loyalty over everything, convinced that continued development of existing players will help the Broncos win the franchise's fourth Super Bowl.

OFFENSE

The Broncos won 15 games last season (including playoffs) with an offense that was easier to appreciate than explain. Unwatchable for stretches against the Eagles, Jets, Raiders, Chargers and Chiefs, the Broncos found ways to win, as Nix became better in the clutch than Mr. Goodwrench. He delivered an NFL-best seven game-winning drives as Denver posted a 12-3 record in one-score contests.

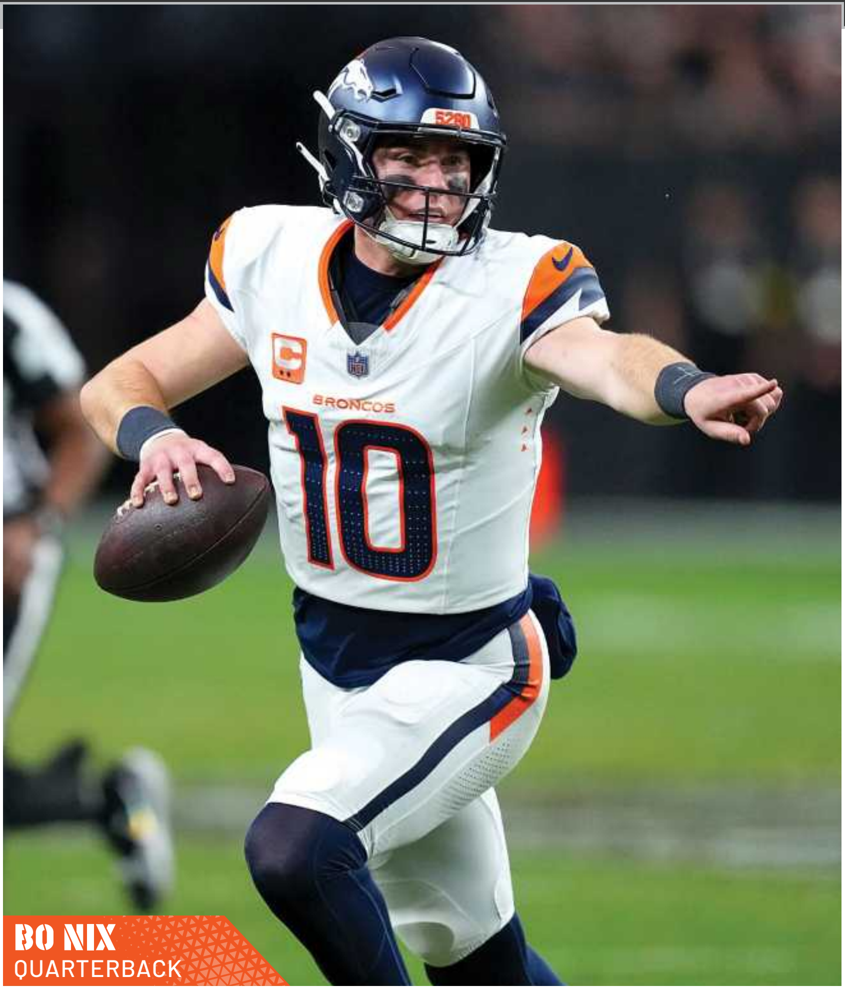
There is no reason to believe that will happen again. Payton acknowledged that by acquiring Waddle, the only significant addition to an offense that has not ranked higher than 10th in points since Payton arrived in Denver. Waddle is a versatile receiver, capable of lining up in the slot or out wide and coming out of breaks more quickly than anyone on the roster. More importantly for Nix, Waddle provides yards after the catch on quick slants and should draw coverage away from third-down security blanket Courtland Sutton. The onus is on Webb, the promoted offensive coordinator, to maximize Waddle.

Webb has microwaved Nix's development. The question is whether his inclination for tempo and added tight end routes for Evan Engram will meet Payton's approval. Payton gave up calling plays because he was consistently taking too long to relay the information to Nix.

Regardless of who is really in charge of the offense, the Broncos aim to improve their running game. They rolled the dice on J.K. Dobbins, giving him a $5.25 million raise despite his absence for the final nine games with a foot injury. Dobbins ranked as a top-five rusher before getting sidelined. Rookie RJ Harvey proved effective as a goal-line runner and a receiver out of the backfield, but he struggled between the tackles and crashed out in the AFC Championship Game. Denver remains hopeful that rookie Jonah Coleman will provide protection in the run game with his physicality if Dobbins gets hurt again.

The offensive line returns all five starters. Pass protection is not a problem, as tackles Garett Bolles and Mike McGlinchey are coming off career-best seasons. Right guard Quinn Meinerz is a road-grader. The metrics say that the Broncos win in run-blocking, but it did not translate over the second half of the season. Better work on the ground will open up play-action strikes in the middle of the field — a deficiency in Nix's career — to Troy Franklin, Marvin Mims Jr. and Engram, the latter of whom was a disappointment in his first season in Denver.

Nix, who is not expected to adjust his style after ankle surgery, has proved that he is a franchise quarterback. His next assignment is clear: a championship.



BO NIX
QUARTERBACK

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

DEFENSE

The Broncos' defense lives for a crisis and relishes pressure. Last season, the group operated with little margin for error, and it was the reason Denver reached the AFC Championship Game.

Coordinator Vance Joseph incorporated hard-hitting safety Talanoa Hufanga into a secondary that already blends man and zone concepts as well as any unit in the NFL. Pat Surtain II is the linchpin, but as Surtain fought through a torn pectoral injury, nickelback Ja'Quan McMillian proved to be a playmaker. Riley Moss experienced a roller-coaster ride opposite Surtain. He plays without fear but must shave his penalties — his handsy approach led him to practice with boxing gloves late last season. Last year's first-round pick, Jahdae Barron, failed to carve out a role last season but could be the reason the Broncos see improvement. There is a chance he pushes McMillian or Moss for playing time, though some believe his future is at safety.

The Broncos' defense works because the coverage syncs with the pressure. Denver set a franchise record for sacks for the second straight season, posting 68. Oddly, it did not result in takeaways, as the Broncos' 14 were one shy of the fewest in franchise history. Improvement in this area remains a top priority.

Edge rusher Nik Bonitto and defensive end Zach Allen are game-wreckers, capable of producing more takeaways. They play off each other, aided by Allen's unselfishness in taking on double teams. Even with the return of wildly underrated Malcolm Roach, a proven run-stuffer, there is hand-wringing over the loss of defensive end John Franklin-Myers, who had to leave to get paid. It is the one starting position open, leaving Eyioma Uwazurike and rookie Tyler Onyedim to compete for snaps.

In a surprise, the Broncos brought back both starting inside linebackers, Alex Singleton and Justin Strnad. Singleton is an inspirational leader, but teams single him out in pass coverage. Strnad has ascended from role player, excelling as a starter. But if either regresses, there will be questions about why the Broncos did not sign Devin Lloyd in free agency.

SPECIALISTS

Darren Rizzi took over as special teams coordinator last season and ran face-first into criticism over the first few months. Between a leverage penalty on a field goal against the Colts, poor tackling on kickoff returns and an unnecessary concussion that Mims sustained in a blowout win, the special teams underwhelmed. But the group settled down as the Broncos went on an 11-game winning streak.

Kicker Wil Lutz remained clutch, converting 28-of-32 field goals. Mims is nails on punt returns, remaining productive despite injuries. After an alarmingly inconsistent training camp, punter Jeremy Crawshaw lived up to expectations. He punted 75 times, landing 40% inside the 20-yard line. He became a force, which cannot be overlooked for a team that leans heavily on winning hidden yards in close games.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The conversation around the Broncos has changed dramatically over the past two seasons — from are they any good to are they good enough? The Broncos do not seem the least bit concerned about relying so heavily on continuity while facing a brutal first-place schedule.

Payton did not want to disrupt the locker room culture, confident that improvement would come from within. There is reason to think some players will get better, like Moss, Barron and Engram.

The reality is that a Super Bowl bid hinges on the offense making strides. Counting on Dobbins' health is a risk, but the Broncos are more equipped to handle his absence with the addition of Coleman.

Ultimately, the Broncos' ability to reach their goal will come down to this question: Can Webb take Nix to the next level?

2025 RESULTS (14-3)

Sept. 7	**TENNESSEE**	**W**	**20-12**
Sept. 14	at Indianapolis	L	28-29
Sept. 21	at L.A. Chargers	L	20-23
Sept. 29	**CINCINNATI**	**W**	**28-3**
Oct. 5	**AT PHILADELPHIA**	**W**	**21-17**
Oct. 12	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**13-11**
Oct. 19	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**33-32**
Oct. 26	**DALLAS**	**W**	**44-24**
Nov. 2	**AT HOUSTON**	**W**	**18-15**
Nov. 6	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**10-7**
Nov. 16	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**22-19**
Nov. 30	**AT WASHINGTON (OT)**	**W**	**27-26**
Dec. 7	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**24-17**
Dec. 14	**GREEN BAY**	**W**	**34-26**
Dec. 21	Jacksonville	L	20-34
Dec. 25	**AT KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**20-13**
Jan. 4	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**19-3**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 17	**BUFFALO (OT)**	**W**	**33-30**
Jan. 25	New England	L	7-10

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	342.6	10	4
RUSHING	118.7	16	7
PASSING	223.9	11	4
SCORING	23.6	14	8
THIRD DOWN %	41.2	10	6
POINTS/PLAY	0.362	18	10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	278.2	2	2
RUSHING	91.1	2	2
PASSING	187.2	7	5
SCORING	18.3	3	2
INTERCEPTIONS	10	T18	T10
SACKS	68	1	1
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.292	2	1
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-3	T19	T9

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
BO NIX	612	388	3,931	25	11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
J.K. DOBBINS	153	772	5.0	4
RJ HARVEY	146	540	3.7	7
BO NIX	83	356	4.3	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
COURTLAND SUTTON	74	1,017	13.7	7
TROY FRANKLIN	65	709	10.9	6
EVAN ENGRAM	50	461	9.2	1
RJ HARVEY	47	356	7.6	5
MARVIN MIMS JR.	37	322	8.7	1

KICKING: Wil Lutz, 28-32 FGs, 39-39 PATs, 123 points
TACKLES: Alex Singleton, 135; Talanoa Hufanga, 106
SACKS: Nik Bonitto, 14.0; Jonathon Cooper, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Ja'Quan McMillian, 2; Dondrea Tillman, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

OH BABY It was an eventful and rewarding offseason both for Broncos head coach **Sean Payton** and quarterback **Bo Nix**. Payton became a grandfather when his daughter, Meghan, gave birth to Ace. And Nix became a father when wife Izzy gave birth to daughter Riley Belle Nix.

NOW TAKE IT AWAY Defensive coordinator Vance Joseph guided a unit that formed the backbone of a division champion. The Broncos broke their franchise single-season sack record for the second straight season, finishing with 68. But even with the pressure, they failed to produce takeaways, producing only 14, one more than the fewest in franchise history.

COACHING CAROUSEL Payton shuffled his offensive staff after reaching the AFC Championship Game. The most notable move was firing offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi, who had worked for Payton off and on for nearly two decades. Pete Carmichael also left his offensive assistant position for a promotion in Buffalo.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME After two decades of running the Colorado Rockies like a mom-and-pop grocery store, owner Dick Monfort brought in Walmart as a partner. Broncos co-owners Greg Penner and Carrie Walton Penner purchased a 40% minority stake of the Rockies in April, an investment of roughly $672 million. There are no plans for the Penners to buy the team, but it is not inconceivable in five years.

SCOUTING THE BRONCOS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DENVER

"Bo Nix's ankle injury cost the Broncos a shot at the Super Bowl. They were right there, and they needed him under center. That was a tough break. The injury has lingered longer than expected, too. … J.K. Dobbins has durability issues, but he's a tough runner with vision. … RJ Harvey is a nice complementary presence to Dobbins. … The trade for Jaylen Waddle is a big upgrade to go with big Courtland Sutton, Troy Franklin and Marvin Mims Jr. … Garett Bolles at left tackle is a powerhouse. … Quinn Meinerz has the gut and the push you want from a right guard. … Mike McGlinchey has prototypical size at right tackle and has been worth every dollar. … I'm not alone in thinking that Adam Trautman and Evan Engram are underwhelming at the tight end position. … Most teams don't use a fullback, but the Broncos find a role for Adam Prentice. … Zach Allen reminds me of J.J. Watt. He's relentless. … Nik Bonitto as a speed rusher is hard to stop. … Jonathon Cooper's intensity is rare. … Talanoa Hufanga is an impact player. … No better corner in the league than Pat Surtain II. … Surprised that Jahdae Barron hasn't carved out more of a significant role yet. ... Riley Moss is solid. … There's grit and toughness inside with Alex Singleton and Justin Strnad. … I'm expecting Tyler Onyedim to plug in right away in the defensive line rotation. … Malcolm Roach doesn't get a lot of hype, but he makes a ton of plays."

RON CHENOY-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 BRONCOS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Ehlinger, Sam	QB	6-2	225	4	Texas	FA-Ind-25	D6-Ind-21
10	Nix, Bo	QB	6-2	217	2	Oregon	D1-24	D1-Den-24
8	Stidham, Jarrett	QB	6-3	215	7	Auburn	FA-LV-23	D4b-NE-19

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28	Badie, Tyler	RB	5-8	194	4	Missouri	PS-Bal-22	D6-Bal-22
27	Dobbins, J.K.	RB	5-10	215	6	Ohio State	FA-LAC-25	D2-Bal-20
12	Harvey, RJ	RB	5-9	208	1	UCF	D2-25	D2-Den-25
	McLaughlin, Jaleel	RB	5-9	183	3	Youngstown State	FA-23	FA-Den-23
	Prentice, Adam	FB	6-0	245	5	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Den-21
25	Schrader, Cody	RB	5-9	214	2	Missouri	W-Hou-25	FA-SF-24
42	Vaughn, Deuce	RB	5-5	185	3	Kansas State	FA-25	D6b-Dal-23

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45	Adkins, Nate	TE	6-3	252	3	South Carolina	FA-23	FA-Den-23
83	Bandy, Michael	WR	5-10	190	4	San Diego	FA-26	FA-LAC-21
13	Bryant, Pat	WR	6-3	200	1	Illinois	D3a-25	D3a-Den-25
1	Engram, Evan	TE	6-3	240	9	Ole Miss	FA-Jac-25	D1-NYG-17
11	Franklin, Troy	WR	6-3	187	2	Oregon	D4-24	D4-Den-24
	Humphrey, Lil'Jordan	WR	6-4	225	7	Texas	PS-NYG-25	FA-NO-19
	Krull, Lucas	TE	6-6	260	4	Pitt	FA-23	FA-NO-22
84	Lohner, Caleb	TE	6-7	250	1	Utah	D7-25	D7-Den-25
19	Mims Jr., Marvin	WR	5-11	184	3	Oklahoma	D2-23	D2-Den-23
87	Perry, A.T.	WR	6-5	205	3	Wake Forest	FA-24	D6-NO-23
14	Sutton, Courtland	WR	6-4	216	8	SMU	D2-18	D2-Den-18
82	Trautman, Adam	TE	6-5	253	6	Dayton	T-NO-23	D3b-NO-20
17	Waddle, Jaylen	WR	5-10	185	5	Alabama	T-Mia-26	D1a-Mia-21
	Woods II, Michael	WR	6-1	204	3	Oklahoma	FA-26	D6-Cle-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72	Bolles, Garett	T	6-5	300	9	Utah	D1-17	D1-Den-17
73	Crum, Frank	T	6-7	315	2	Wyoming	FA-24	FA-Den-24
	Deiter, Michael	C	6-6	315	7	Wisconsin	FA-26	D3-Mia-19
54	Forsyth, Alex	C	6-4	312	3	Oregon	D7-23	D7-Den-23
66	Gargiulo, Nick	G	6-5	327	2	South Carolina	D7b-24	D7b-Den-24
	Jones, Nash	G	6-4	314	1	Texas State	FA-26	FA-LAC-25
69	McGlinchey, Mike	T	6-8	310	8	Notre Dame	FA-SF-23	D1-SF-18
77	Meinerz, Quinn	G	6-3	320	5	Wisc.-Whitewater	D3a-21	D3a-Den-21
63	Palczewski, Alex	T	6-6	315	3	Illinois	FA-23	FA-Den-23
79	Peart, Matt	T	6-7	315	6	UConn	FA-NYG-24	D3-NYG-20
74	Powers, Ben	G	6-4	338	7	Oklahoma	FA-Bal-23	D4b-Bal-19
76	Throckmorton, Calvin	G	6-5	311	6	Oregon	FA-Ten-24	FA-NO-20
60	Wattenberg, Luke	C	6-5	300	4	Washington	D5c-22	D5c-Den-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99	Allen, Zach	DL	6-4	281	7	Boston College	FA-Ari-23	D3-Ari-19
91	Henningsen, Matt	DL	6-3	291	3	Wisconsin	D6-22	D6-Den-22
94	Jackson, Jordan	DL	6-5	285	2	Air Force	FA-23	D6-NO-22
93	Jones, D.J.	DT	6-0	305	9	Ole Miss	FA-SF-22	D6a-SF-17
95	Jones, Sai'vion	DE	6-6	280	1	LSU	D3b-25	D3b-Den-25
90	Miller, Jordan	NT	6-3	307	1	SMU	FA-24	FA-Den-24
97	Roach, Malcolm	DT	6-3	290	6	Texas	FA-NO-24	FA-NO-20
96	Uwazurike, Eyioma	DL	6-6	320	3	Iowa State	D4b-22	D4b-Den-22
	Williams, Kristian	DL	6-2	295	1	Missouri	FA-26	FA-Den-25

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Bailey, Levelle	ILB	6-2	225	2	Fresno State	FA-24	FA-Den-24
15	Bonitto, Nik	OLB	6-3	240	4	Oklahoma	D2-22	D2-Den-22
0	Cooper, Jonathon	OLB	6-4	257	5	Ohio State	D7b-21	D7b-Den-21
52	Elliss, Jonah	OLB	6-2	246	2	Utah	D3-24	D3-Den-24
47	Reid, Karene	ILB	6-0	226	1	Utah	FA-25	FA-Den-25
51	Robinson, Que	OLB	6-5	241	1	Alabama	D4-25	D4-Den-25
41	Sanders, Drew	LB	6-5	233	3	Arkansas	D3a-23	D3a-Den-23
49	Singleton, Alex	ILB	6-2	240	7	Montana State	FA-Phi-22	FA-Sea-15
40	Strnad, Justin	ILB	6-3	235	6	Wake Forest	D5-20	D5-Den-20
92	Tillman, Dondrea	OLB	6-4	247	2	Indiana (Pa.)	FA-24	FA-Den-24
55	Turner, Jordan	ILB	6-1	231	1	Michigan State	FA-25	FA-Den-25
59	Walker, Johnny	OLB	6-3	250	1	Missouri	FA-25	FA-Den-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
31	Abrams-Draine, Kris	CB	5-11	178	2	Missouri	D5a-24	D5a-Den-24
	Anderson, Tycen	S	6-2	205	4	Toledo	FA-Cin-26	D5-Cin-22
23	Barron, Jahdae	CB	5-11	200	1	Texas	D1-25	D1-Den-25
9	Hufanga, Talanoa	S	6-0	200	5	USC	FA-SF-25	D5c-SF-21
22	Jones, Brandon	S	6-1	190	6	Texas	FA-Mia-24	D3-Mia-20
26	Key, Devon	S	6-0	208	3	WKU	FA-22	FA-KC-21
29	McMillian, Ja'Quan	CB	5-10	183	4	East Carolina	FA-22	FA-Den-22
21	Moss, Riley	CB	6-1	193	3	Iowa	D3b-23	D3b-Den-23
33	Robinson, Jaden	CB	6-0	193	1	Oregon State	FA-25	FA-Den-25
34	Skinner, JL	S	6-4	220	3	Boise State	D6-23	D6-Den-23
2	Surtain II, Pat	CB	6-2	202	5	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Den-21
35	Taylor, Reese	CB	5-10	188	2	Purdue	FA-23	FA-KC-23

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Crawshaw, Jeremy	P	6-3	205	1	Florida	D6-25	D6-Den-25
48	Fraboni, Mitchell	LS	6-2	223	4	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Hou-21
3	Lutz, Wil	K	5-11	184	10	Georgia State	T-NO-23	FA-Bal-16

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Courtland Sutton		Lil'Jordan Humphrey
WR	17	Jaylen Waddle	19	Marvin Mims Jr.
WR	11	Troy Franklin	13	Pat Bryant
LT	72	Garett Bolles	79	Matt Peart
LG	74	Ben Powers	76	Calvin Throckmorton
C	60	Luke Wattenberg	54	Alex Forsyth
RG	77	Quinn Meinerz	78	Kage Casey (R)
RT	69	Mike McGlinchey	63	Alex Palczewski
TE	82	Adam Trautman	1	Evan Engram
QB	10	Bo Nix	8	Jarrett Stidham
RB	27	J.K. Dobbins	12	RJ Harvey

DEFENSE

DE	99	Zach Allen	98	Tyler Onyedim (R)
NT	93	D.J. Jones	97	Malcolm Roach
DE	96	Eyioma Uwazurike	95	Sai'vion Jones
OLB	0	Jonathon Cooper	51	Que Robinson
ILB	49	Alex Singleton	41	Drew Sanders
ILB	40	Justin Strnad	50	Red Murdock (R)
OLB	15	Nik Bonitto	92	Dondrea Tillman
CB	21	Riley Moss	23	Jahdae Barron
CB	2	Pat Surtain II	31	Kris Abrams-Draine
SS	22	Brandon Jones	34	JL Skinner
FS	9	Talanoa Hufanga	26	Devon Key

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Wil Lutz	PR	19	Marvin Mims Jr.
P	16	Jeremy Crawshaw	KR	19	Marvin Mims Jr.

116

Cornerback Riley Moss led the NFL in coverage targets at 116 and was second in yards allowed at 863.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
3	Tyler Onyedim	DT	6-3	292	Texas A&M
4	Jonah Coleman	RB	5-8	220	Washington
4	Kage Casey	OG	6-5	310	Boise State
5	Justin Joly	TE	6-3	241	NC State
7	Miles Scott	S	5-11	210	Illinois
7	Dallen Bentley	TE	6-4	253	Utah
7	Red Murdock	LB	6-1	232	Buffalo

The Broncos were the last team to make a pick in the draft, taking Tyler Onyedim in the third round to compete for snaps along the defensive line. It was a boring, methodical and slightly risky pick. Onyedim is considered a reach at where he was taken. They addressed depth concerns, but outside of Kage Casey and tight ends Justin Joly and Dallen Bentley, how many will be active on game day? They should have drafted a tight end earlier. The onus is on Jonah Coleman to define this class. He enters as the third running back, and his ability to run between the tackles sets him up to steal snaps from RJ Harvey and serve as J.K. Dobbins' backup. Coleman led all college runners with 71% of his yards coming after contact. If he becomes a pinball for the Broncos, the offense will hit the jackpot.

CHIEFS

AFC WEST FORECAST

3

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 14	**DENVER**	**8:15**
SEPT. 20	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**8:20**
SEPT. 27	AT MIAMI	1:00
OCT. 4	AT LAS VEGAS	4:25
OCT. 11	BYE	
OCT. 18	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**4:25**
OCT. 25	AT SEATTLE	8:20
NOV. 1	AT DENVER	4:25
NOV. 8	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	AT ATLANTA	1:00
NOV. 22	**ARIZONA**	**1:00**
NOV. 26	AT BUFFALO	8:20
DEC. 3	AT L.A. RAMS	8:15
DEC. 13	AT CINCINNATI	4:25
DEC. 21	**NEW ENGLAND**	**8:15**
DEC. 27	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**4:25**
TBD	AT L.A. CHARGERS	
TBD	**LAS VEGAS**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	AFC PLAYOFFS	12
2022	SUPER BOWL CHAMPION	14
2023	SUPER BOWL CHAMPION	11
2024	SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	15
2025		6

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **ANDY REID**
Record With Team: **149-64**
Career Record: **279-157-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **ERIC BIENIEMY**
Defensive Coordinator: **STEVE SPAGNUOLO**
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: **DAVE TOUB**
Quarterbacks: **DAVID GIRARDI**
Pass Game Coordinator: **JOE BLEYMAIER**
Running Backs: **DeMARCO MURRAY**
Wide Receivers: **CHAD O'SHEA**
Tight Ends: **TOM MELVIN**
Offensive Line: **ANDY HECK**
Defensive Line: **JOE CULLEN**
Linebackers: **BRENDAN DALY**
Linebackers/Outside Linebackers: **MATT HOUSE**
Defensive Backs: **DAVE MERRITT**

Few foresaw the Kansas City Chiefs' six-win faceplant in 2025, but things went from bad to catastrophic in mid-December when all-world quarterback Patrick Mahomes tore the ACL and LCL in his left knee. While Mahomes isn't expected to miss many — if any — games after an aggressive offseason rehab, the Chiefs won't take unnecessary chances with the face of the franchise. Given the offense's struggles to create explosive plays, especially in the run game, perhaps head coach Andy Reid always planned to evolve the offense toward greater balance, but Mahomes' injury likely hastened that plan.

The Chiefs are accustomed to facing two-deep shell coverage and light boxes, but the inability to punish opposing defenses with explosive runs eroded the offense's effectiveness over time. Enter reigning Super Bowl MVP Kenneth Walker III, who ranks among the NFL's best running backs at forcing missed tackles and creating chunk plays (runs of 10-plus yards).

Under offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy's tutelage, the Chiefs' offense aims to instill the kind of fear that forged a dynasty, with Walker keeping defenses honest or punishing them for continuing to defend deep. Either way, Mahomes' life should get easier.

OFFENSE

Bieniemy replaces Matt Nagy, after the latter's RPO-heavy scheme struggled to produce at the level Mahomes-led offenses historically have, especially late in close games. Walker brings a dynamism to the backfield that Kansas City hasn't had since early in Kareem Hunt's career. He should thrive running behind the Chiefs' stout interior offensive line. Left guard Kingsley Suamataia, center Creed Humphrey and right guard Trey Smith are a powerful, athletic run-blocking corps, able to move people off the ball or operate in space.

The Chiefs finished dead last in the NFL in play-action passing yards in 2025, but a more effective run game — perhaps with Mahomes under center more — should reverse that trend. Emari Demercado, who flashed big-play ability in three seasons with Arizona, joins Walker as a third-down option in a remade backfield along with fifth-round pick Emmett Johnson (Nebraska), a shifty, versatile back who led the Big Ten in rushing last season. Brashard Smith projects as the lone returning back, but the Chiefs will need to identify a short-yardage runner.

Tackle might be a question mark for Kansas City. Left tackle Josh Simmons played fine after winning the job as a rookie, but he also missed time with injuries and a personal issue. Jaylon Moore, who projects as Jawaan Taylor's replacement at right tackle, struggled in pass protection during his first season with the Chiefs. Perhaps a more defined role will bring out the best in Moore, but it was surprising not to see Kansas City shore up the offensive line in the draft with Esa Pole and Wanya Morris slated as backups for a position group that got banged up last season.

Wide receiver Rashee Rice was very good for the half of a season he played between suspensions and injuries, while the speedy Xavier Worthy muddled through an underwhelming, injury-plagued second NFL season. Both should benefit from an improved rushing attack along with Tyquan Thornton, who re-signed after showing deep-ball chemistry with Mahomes last season. But the receiving corps feels thin. Fifth-round pick Cyrus Allen (Cincinnati) was the only significant offseason addition.

PATRICK MAHOMES
QUARTERBACK

KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES

Future Hall of Famer Travis Kelce isn't the dominant force he once was, but he's still among the NFL's most productive tight ends. He's back for (probably!) his last hurrah. The Chiefs will hope Noah Gray regains his 2024 form after a down year.

Justin Fields is Kansas City's fifth different backup QB in five seasons. The team also spent a seventh-round pick on LSU's Garrett Nussmeier.

DEFENSE

On the surface, Kansas City's defense performed well in 2025 — ranking sixth in scoring defense (19.3 ppg), ninth in rushing defense (105.7 ypg), 12th in passing defense (195.8 ypg) and 10th in total defense (301.5 ypg). But the Chiefs were deficient in three major areas — creating turnovers, sacking the quarterback and getting off the field on third down. Steve Spagnuolo's unit created the fourth-fewest turnovers (14), recorded the seventh-fewest sacks (35) and had the fourth-worst third-down conversion percentage defense (43.6%) — hence the makeover.

Tackle Chris Jones remains an elite interior disruptor, and the Chiefs finally paired him with a hulking, space-eating, run-stuffing nose tackle in Khyiris Tonga. Omarr Norman-Lott, who is returning from a knee injury, and first-round pick Peter Woods bring pass-rush upside to the interior rotation.

On the edge, end George Karlaftis needs to live up to his sizable contract extension after managing a career-low six sacks in 2025. The rest of the projected DE group — Ashton Gillotte, who was solid as a rookie last season; Felix Anudike-Uzomah, who has yet to justify the first-round pick Kansas City used on him in 2023; and second-round pick R Mason Thomas, who notched 15.5 sacks and 22 tackles for a loss in the last two seasons at Oklahoma — is unproven. But Thomas brings a speed element that the Chiefs' pass rush has lacked.

The secondary must replace three starters — safety Bryan Cook (signed with the Cincinnati Bengals in free agency) and corners Trent McDuffie (Los Angeles Rams via trade) and Jaylen Watson (signed with the Rams). Kansas City signed versatile veteran Alohi Gilman, who spent last season with the Los Angeles Chargers and Baltimore Ravens, to replace Cook. He joins a solid if unspectacular safety rotation with Chamarri Conner and Jaden Hicks. The Chiefs will count on Mansoor Delane, the No. 6 overall pick from LSU and best cover corner in the draft, and second-year CB Nohl Williams as the starting boundary corners with Kader Kohou, who missed last season with an ACL injury, stepping in at nickel.

Middle linebacker Nick Bolton is coming off arguably his best season and remains the heartbeat of Spagnuolo's defense. He's flanked by WLB Drue Tranquill, an ideal complement to Bolton. The quest to replace Leo Chenal (signed with the Washington Commanders), an elite run-stopper at SLB, begins with 2025 undrafted free agent Cooper McDonald.

SPECIALISTS

The Chiefs need to squeeze more from the return game. Nikko Remigio's punt- and kickoff-return averages were pedestrian last season, with Brashard Smith offering marginally better production.

Placekicker Harrison Butker has connected on fewer than 87% of his field-goal attempts each of the past two seasons. But he's signed through 2028, so the Chiefs need him to bounce back.

Matt Araiza, a roughly league-average punter in his first two NFL seasons, returns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Chiefs have seemed invincible through much of Mahomes' career, but he was mortal last season even before the knee injury. Nobody in Kansas City doubts that he'll return better than ever, but the offense needs to re-establish an aura of dominance.

Kansas City went to great lengths to add youth and talent on defense, and the goal will be the same as it's been for the last decade — win a Super Bowl. But in the AFC West, one of the NFL's toughest divisions, that won't be easy.

2025 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept. 5	at L.A. Chargers	L	21-27
Sept. 14	Philadelphia	L	17-20
Sept. 21	**AT N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**22-9**
Sept. 28	**BALTIMORE**	**W**	**37-20**
Oct. 6	at Jacksonville	L	28-31
Oct. 12	**DETROIT**	**W**	**30-17**
Oct. 19	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**31-0**
Oct. 27	**WASHINGTON**	**W**	**28-7**
Nov. 2	at Buffalo	L	21-28
Nov. 16	at Denver	L	19-22
Nov. 23	**INDIANAPOLIS (OT)**	**W**	**23-20**
Nov. 27	at Dallas	L	28-31
Dec. 7	Houston	L	10-20
Dec. 14	L.A. Chargers	L	13-16
Dec. 21	at Tennessee	L	9-26
Dec. 25	Denver	L	13-20
Jan. 4	at Las Vegas	L	12-14

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	320.6	20	10
RUSHING	106.6	25	11
PASSING	214.1	16	8
SCORING	21.3	21	11
THIRD DOWN %	37.4	22	10
POINTS/PLAY	0.341	23	11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	301.5	10	7
RUSHING	105.7	9	7
PASSING	195.8	12	9
SCORING	19.3	6	4
INTERCEPTIONS	10	T18	T10
SACKS	35	T22	T11
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.331	T7	T4
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-1	14	7

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
PATRICK MAHOMES	502	315	3,587	22	11
CHRIS OLADOKUN	55	35	235	1	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
KAREEM HUNT	163	611	3.7	8
ISIAH PACHECO	118	462	3.9	1
PATRICK MAHOMES	64	422	6.6	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
TRAVIS KELCE	76	851	11.2	5
RASHEE RICE	53	571	10.8	5
HOLLYWOOD BROWN	49	587	12.0	5
XAVIER WORTHY	42	532	12.7	1
JUJU SMITH-SCHUSTER	33	345	10.5	1

KICKING: Harrison Butker, 33-38 FGs, 31-35 PATs, 130 points; **TACKLES:** Nick Bolton, 154; Chamarri Conner, 117; **SACKS:** Chris Jones, 7.0, George Karlaftis, 6.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Jaylen Watson, 2; 8 players tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

WEDDING OF THE CENTURY Perhaps no storyline swirling around the Chiefs has been more scrutinized and anticipated this offseason than Travis Kelce's wedding plans. The future Hall of Fame tight end got engaged to global pop icon Taylor Swift last summer, and the couple is planning to tie the knot shortly before this year's training camp. We suspect the happy couple will choose somewhere other than Chiefs training camp in St. Joseph, Missouri, for the honeymoon, though she did famously perform at a festival in the town early in her career.

JACOB MUSSELMAN-IMAGN IMAGES

MOVING UP FOR MANSOOR The Chiefs were threadbare at cornerback after trading Trent McDuffie and allowing Jaylen Watson to leave via free agency. With a rare chance to draft in the top 10, Kansas City aggressively leapfrogged the Washington Commanders and New Orleans Saints, two other cornerback-needy teams, to snag the draft's top cover man, LSU's **Mansoor Delane**, at No. 6 overall. Delane plays with fluidity and moxie, staying in phase and in control in man coverage — enough to give defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo a man crush. "He liked him a lot, so it was Christmas for him," said head coach Andy Reid.

ENJOY ARROWHEAD WHILE YOU CAN The world's loudest stadium, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, has an expiration date. GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium has been the Chiefs' home since 1972, but the team announced plans in December 2025 to leave Missouri and build a new domed stadium in Kansas. It's scheduled to open in 2031, leaving only five more years at Arrowhead. Put it on your bucket list if you've never been to a game at the 54-year-old stadium.

CUP ADJUSTMENT The Chiefs trimmed the number of OTAs to a league-low six and moved up mandatory minicamp by a week with GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium hosting six FIFA World Cup games. "It's a great thing for the city, but not so great coming out of our parking lot, though. So, I figured we'd just cut the chaos there a little bit in half and get our guys out of the mix," Reid explained.

SCOUTING THE CHIEFS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP KANSAS CITY

"The comeback is on. Patrick Mahomes is ahead of schedule in his rehab. He's expected to get back to where he was as a scrambling presence. … Not sold collectively on this receiving corps. Tyquan Thornton is fast but not a great route-runner. Rashee Rice needs to be more consistent. … The speed of Xavier Worthy is a huge factor. … I still think that Travis Kelce has a lot left in the tank, definitely enough to bolster the passing game one more time. … The Chiefs have the best center [Creed Humphrey] and right guard [Trey Smith] in the league. … There were a lot of up-and-down moments last year for Josh Simmons as a rookie left tackle, but the potential is still there. … Justin Fields as a backup to Mahomes was a good idea. … Paying big money for Kenneth Walker III should raise the level of the running game right away. … Chris Jones has had a Hall of Fame career, but his lack of consistent effort is becoming more and more glaring each year. … George Karlaftis is a problem for offenses. He punches all game long. … Peter Woods' addition should give the interior defensive line a real shot in the arm. … The linebacker corps is in good hands with Drue Tranquill and Nick Bolton. … They paid big money for safety Alohi Gilman, and you can see why. … The Chiefs haven't had a corner as talented as Mansoor Delane in several years."

2026 CHIEFS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Fields, Justin	QB	6-3	227	5	Ohio State	T-NYJ-26	D1-Chi-21
15	Mahomes, Patrick	QB	6-2	225	9	Texas Tech	D1-17	D1-KC-17
19	Oladokun, Chris	QB	6-1	213	1	South Dakota State	FA-22	FA-Pit-22

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Demercado, Emari	RB	5-9	215	3	TCU	FA-Ari-26	FA-Ari-23
24	Smith, Brashard	RB	5-10	196	1	SMU	D7-25	D7-KC-25
9	Walker III, Kenneth	RB	5-9	216	4	Michigan State	FA-Sea-26	D2b-Sea-22

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
85	Armstrong, Andrew	WR	6-4	202	1	Arkansas	FA-26	FA-Mia-25
88	Briningstool, Jake	TE	6-6	240	1	Clemson	FA-25	FA-KC-25
89	Brownlee, Jason	WR	6-3	202	2	Southern Miss	FA-24	FA-NYJ-23
83	Gray, Noah	TE	6-3	240	5	Duke	D5a-21	D5a-KC-21
82	Holiday, Jimmy	WR	6-1	211	1	Louisiana Tech	FA-25	FA-KC-25
87	Kelce, Travis	TE	6-5	250	13	Cincinnati	D3a-13	D3a-KC-13
81	Remigio, Nikko	WR	5-9	187	1	Fresno State	FA-23	FA-KC-23
4	Rice, Rashee	WR	6-1	204	3	SMU	D2-23	D2-KC-23
11	Royals, Jalen	WR	6-0	195	1	Utah State	D4-25	D4-KC-25
2	Thornton, Tyquan	WR	6-2	185	4	Baylor	FA-24	D2-NE-22
49	Watson, Tre	TE	6-5	250	1	Texas A&M	FA-25	FA-KC-25
12	Wiley, Jared	TE	6-6	249	2	TCU	D4a-24	D4a-KC-24
1	Worthy, Xavier	WR	5-11	165	2	Texas	D1-24	D1-KC-24

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66	Caliendo, Mike	OL	6-4	301	3	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-KC-22
75	Driskell, Ethan	T	6-8	313	1	Marshall	FA-24	FA-KC-24
72	Godrick, Chukwuebuka	T	6-5	293	1	None	FA-23	FA-KC-23
61	Hanson, C.J.	OL	6-5	300	1	Holy Cross	D7-24	D7-KC-24
52	Humphrey, Creed	C	6-4	302	5	Oklahoma	D2b-21	D2b-KC-21
77	Moore, Jaylon	OL	6-4	311	5	Western Michigan	FA-SF-25	D5a-SF-21
64	Morris, Wanya	OL	6-6	307	3	Oklahoma	D3-23	D3-KC-23
60	Nourzad, Hunter	OL	6-3	317	2	Penn State	D5-24	D5-KC-24
79	Pole, Esa	OL	6-7	319	1	Washington State	FA-25	FA-KC-25
71	Simmons, Josh	T	6-5	310	1	Ohio State	D1-25	D1-KC-25
65	Smith, Trey	G	6-6	321	5	Tennessee	D6-21	D6-KC-21
76	Suamataia, Kingsley	OL	6-4	326	2	BYU	D2-24	D2-KC-24
73	Waletzko, Matt	T	6-8	305	2	North Dakota	FA-25	D5-Dal-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
91	Anudike-Uzomah, Felix	DE	6-4	255	3	Kansas State	D1-23	D1-KC-23
40	Downs, Ethan	DE	6-4	263	1	Oklahoma	FA-25	FA-Jac-25
97	Gillotte, Ashton	DE	6-3	270	1	Louisville	D3-25	D3-KC-25
68	Harris, Marcus	DT	6-3	295	1	Auburn	FA-25	D7-Hou-24
95	Jones, Chris	DT	6-6	310	10	Mississippi State	D2-16	D2-KC-16
56	Karlaftis, George	DE	6-4	263	4	Purdue	D1b-22	D1b-KC-22
55	Norman-Lott, Omarr	DT	6-3	315	1	Tennessee	D2-25	D2-KC-25
57	Smith, Tyreke	DE	6-3	255	1	Ohio State	FA-25	D2-Sea-22
92	Tonga, Khyiris	DT	6-2	335	5	BYU	FA-NE-26	D7-Chi-21

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
53	Arnold, Kam	LB	6-1	229	1	Boston College	FA-25	FA-Was-25
31	Bassa, Jeffrey	LB	6-2	235	1	Oregon	D5-25	D5-KC-25
32	Bolton, Nick	LB	5-11	237	5	Missouri	D2a-21	D2a-KC-21
48	Christiansen, Cole	LB	6-1	230	2	Army	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
43	Cochrane, Jack	LB	6-3	236	4	South Dakota	FA-22	FA-KC-22
59	McDonald, Cooper	LB	6-3	240	1	TCU	FA-25	FA-KC-25
23	Tranquill, Drue	LB	6-2	234	7	Notre Dame	FA-LAC-24	D4-LAC-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
27	Conner, Chamarri	DB	6-0	202	3	Virginia Tech	D4-23	D4-KC-23
	Elam, Kaiir	CB	6-1	191	4	Florida	FA-Ten-26	D1-Buf-22
8	Fulton, Kristian	CB	5-11	197	6	LSU	FA-LAC-25	D2-Ten-20
17	Gilman, Alohi	S	5-10	201	6	Notre Dame	FA-Bal-26	D6-LAC-20
21	Hicks, Jaden	DB	6-1	215	2	Washington State	D4b-24	D4b-KC-24
38	Knowles, Kevin	DB	5-11	190	1	Florida State	FA-25	FA-KC-25
26	Kohou, Kader	CB	5-10	197	4	TAMU-Commerce	FA-Mia-26	FA-Mia-22
	McCalister, Tanner	S	5-11	191	1	Ohio State	FA-25	FA-Cle-23
30	Roland-Wallace, Chris	CB	5-11	202	2	USC	FA-24	FA-KC-24
39	Smith Jr., Melvin	CB	6-1	185	1	Southern Arkansas	FA-25	FA-KC-25
20	Williams, Nohl	DB	6-1	200	1	California	D3-25	D3-KC-25

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Araiza, Matt	P	6-1	200	2	San Diego State	FA-25	D6-Buf-22
7	Butker, Harrison	K	6-4	205	9	Georgia Tech	FA-17	FA-Car-17
41	Winchester, James	LS	6-3	240	11	Oklahoma	FA-15	FA-Phi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	4	Rashee Rice	81	Nikko Remigio
WR	1	Xavier Worthy	11	Jalen Royals
WR	2	Tyquan Thornton	13	Cyrus Allen (R)
LT	71	Josh Simmons	79	Esa Pole
LG	76	Kingsley Suamataia	66	Mike Caliendo
C	52	Creed Humphrey	60	Hunter Nourzad
RG	65	Trey Smith	61	C.J. Hanson
RT	77	Jaylon Moore	64	Wanya Morris
TE	87	Travis Kelce	83	Noah Gray
QB	15	Patrick Mahomes		Justin Fields
RB	9	Kenneth Walker III	25	Emari Demercado

DEFENSE

DE	56	George Karlaftis	97	Ashton Gillotte
DT	92	Khyiris Tonga	55	Omarr Norman-Lott
DT	95	Chris Jones	99	Peter Woods (R)
DE	91	Felix Anudike-Uzomah	34	R Mason Thomas (R)
LB	23	Drue Tranquill	31	Jeffrey Bassa
LB	32	Nick Bolton	43	Jack Cochrane
CB	20	Nohl Williams		Kaiir Elam
CB	5	Mansoor Delane (R)	8	Kristian Fulton
NB	26	Kader Kohou	30	Chris Roland-Wallace
S	27	Chamarri Conner	21	Jaden Hicks
S	17	Alohi Gilman	22	Jadon Canady (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Harrison Butker	KR	24	Brashard Smith
P	14	Matt Araiza	PR	81	Nikko Remigio

3.03 The Chiefs allowed a league-best average time to pressure of 3.03 seconds, 0.12 seconds ahead of the second-place Giants.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Mansoor Delane	CB	5-11	187	LSU
1	Peter Woods	DT	6-2	298	Clemson
2	R Mason Thomas	DE	6-2	241	Oklahoma
4	Jadon Canady	S	5-10	181	Oregon
5	Emmett Johnson	RB	5-10	202	Nebraska
5	Cyrus Allen	WR	5-11	180	Cincinnati
7	Garrett Nussmeier	QB	6-1	203	LSU

Cornerback was a huge need for the Chiefs after trading All-Pro Trent McDuffie to the Los Angeles Rams, who also signed Kansas City's other starting CB last season (Jaylen Watson). Mansoor Delane was CB1 in the draft — a fluid, supremely confident, scheme-versatile defender — so general manager Brett Veach was aggressive in moving up to select him. Peter Woods and R Mason Thomas should bring pass-rush juice, especially on third down, to a thin defensive-line rotation, while there are snaps to be had for Jadon Canady after Bryan Cook's departure via free agency. Emmett Johnson is an intriguing complementary addition to Kenneth Walker III in the backfield. Cyrus Allen is a potential late-round gem, while Garrett Nussmeier was a value pick who'll start out as QB3.

RAIDERS

AFC WEST FORECAST
4

Operation Fernando Mendoza is in full effect in Las Vegas, where the Raiders, now led by minority owner Tom Brady and general manager John Spytek, spent the entire offseason fortifying the infrastructure around their new quarterback, whom they selected first overall in the 2026 NFL Draft. Preparing for the arrival of Mendoza, the Heisman Trophy winner and national champion from Indiana, drove every decision the Raiders made during the offseason, including firing head coach Pete Carroll after only one season and replacing him with Klint Kubiak, who was coming off a Super Bowl championship as the offensive coordinator of the Seattle Seahawks.

It didn't stop there, though. Brady knows quarterbacks, and specifically what they need around them to be successful. The club fortified the offensive line, first by hiring respected offensive line coach Rick Dennison, and then by reeling in former Baltimore Raven Tyler Linderbaum on the richest center contract in league history.

The Raiders also added Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Jalen Nailor, who they believe will flourish in a much bigger role. Defensively, they added veteran linebackers who are still in their primes — Quay Walker and Nakobe Dean — along with pass-rusher Kwity Paye and cornerback Taron Johnson.

Finally, they brought in veteran quarterback Kirk Cousins to mentor Mendoza and serve as the bridge to the rookie.

Everything they did was geared to supporting Mendoza, the organization's most valuable asset in decades. It doesn't mean the three-win Raiders will turn things around instantaneously. They fully expect 2026 to be a transitional season. The goal is to be in a position to turn the corner in 2027. If that happens sooner, great. But they are being realistic in their expectations, so don't expect them to pull the plug on Kubiak if this is a multi-year proposition. They envision Kubiak and Mendoza being a decades-long partnership. At least they hope so, anyway.

OFFENSE

The Raiders are determined not to rush Mendoza, so don't be surprised if Cousins gets the starting nod out of the gate. However, they won't sit Mendoza due to any organizational philosophy, either. If he shows he is ready to be the starter, they won't hesitate to put him on the field.

Part of that will be the supporting cast's ability to support Mendoza, too. Linderbaum is the linchpin of the offensive line, which welcomes back left tackle Kolton Miller, who played in only four games last year before going down with a season-ending ankle injury. Everything else is up for grabs, with Jackson Powers-Johnson, Caleb Rogers, DJ Glaze, Charles Grant, Spencer Burford and rookie Trey Zuhn III battling for the two guard spots and right tackle job.

The Raiders must get their offensive line squared away after it misfired so badly last year. The dysfunction affected everything from how Geno Smith performed at quarterback, to Ashton Jeanty's struggles to run the ball consistently, to the inability to get dynamic tight end Brock Bowers or wide receivers Tre Tucker and others untracked.

Kubiak's scheme is expected to help, as will Cousins' leadership, either as the starter or Mendoza's sounding board. He is well-versed in the offense, so his experience will be critical. It can't get much worse than the 14.2 points per game the Raiders averaged last year. But it remains to be seen just how much better the offense can be. If the offensive line improves, that will help everyone from

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**MIAMI**	**4:25**
SEPT. 20	AT L.A. CHARGERS	4:05
SEPT. 27	AT NEW ORLEANS	4:25
OCT. 4	**KANSAS CITY**	**4:25**
OCT. 11	AT NEW ENGLAND	1:00
OCT. 18	**BUFFALO**	**4:25**
OCT. 25	**L.A. RAMS**	**4:25**
NOV. 1	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
NOV. 8	AT SAN FRANCISCO	4:05
NOV. 15	**SEATTLE**	**4:05**
NOV. 22	AT DENVER	4:25
NOV. 29	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
DEC. 6	BYE	
DEC. 13	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**4:05**
DEC. 20	**DENVER**	**4:25**
DEC. 27	**TENNESSEE**	**4:05**
JAN. 3	AT ARIZONA	4:05
TBD	AT KANSAS CITY	

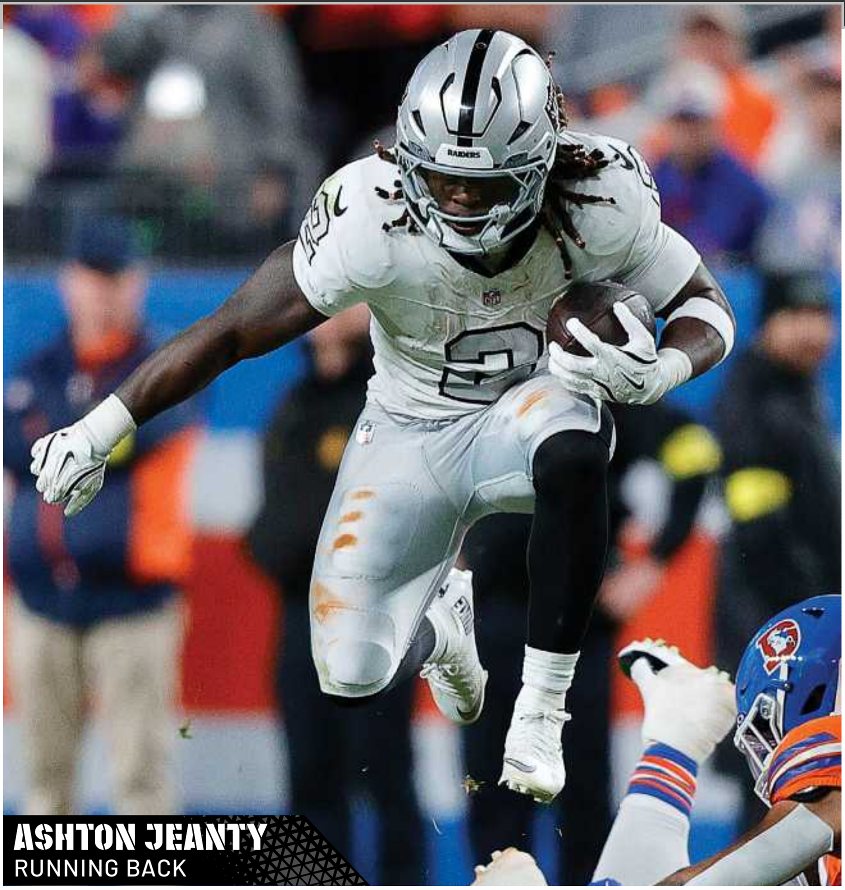
All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2022	6
2023	8
2024	4
2025	3

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **KLINT KUBIAK**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **ANDREW JANOCKO**
Defensive Coordinator: **ROB LEONARD**
Special Teams Coordinator: **JOE DeCAMILLIS**
Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: **NICK HOLZ**
Offensive Run Game Coordinator: **MARIO JEBERAEEL**
Running Backs: **OMAR YOUNG**
Wide Receivers: **ZACH AZZANNI**
Tight Ends: **LUKE STECKEL**
Offensive Line: **RICK DENNISON**
Defensive Line: **TRAVIS SMITH**
Linebackers: **RONELL WILLIAMS**
Pass Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **JOE WOODS**
Safeties: **MATT ROBINSON**


ASHTON JEANTY
RUNNING BACK

ISAIAH J. DOWNING-IMAGN IMAGES

Bowers to Jeanty to the rest of the passing attack. Bowers and Jeanty, in particular, could be in for big seasons. Both are dynamic players with Pro Bowl-level talent. But they obviously need help.

DEFENSE

For a couple of days during the offseason, the Raiders and star defensive end Maxx Crosby were headed for a divorce. Crosby was not feeling yet another rebuild after so many others had failed, and he asked for a trade. The club obliged by sending him to the Ravens for two first-round picks.

Or so they thought. Upon further review, the Ravens had misgivings about the state of Crosby's injured knee, so they nixed the trade and sent him back to Las Vegas. Interestingly, in the four days he was away, the Raiders added a plethora of defensive help, meaning the team he returned to looked far different from the one he wanted to leave.

With Crosby now back in the fold and surrounded by established veterans like Paye, Walker, Dean and Johnson, the whole picture looks different.

The Raiders also promoted their long-time defensive line coach, Rob Leonard, to the defensive coordinator position, which also helps. The Leonard promotion is of particular interest, especially in light of Kubiak taking over as the head coach and focusing primarily on the offense. This will be Leonard's defense, as opposed to last year, when defensive coordinator Patrick Graham and Carroll, a defensive-minded head coach, tried to mesh their defensive philosophies, only for the contrast in styles to create dysfunction on the field.

The singular voice of Leonard could go a long way in helping improve the defense, especially now that Walker and Dean are on hand, and draft picks like safety Treydan Stukes and defensive end Keyron Crawford arrive to lend playmaking and pass-rush help.

The Raiders might also have the steal of the draft in Tennessee cornerback Jermod McCoy, who was considered a top-15 draft prospect but fell to the fourth round because of concerns about his surgically repaired right knee. If McCoy can stay healthy, the Raiders have added a dynamic player to their secondary. He joins veteran Eric Stokes and second-year prospect Darien Porter in a big, fast, physical cornerback rotation.

On the defensive line, Crosby, Paye, Malcolm Koonce, Charles Snowden and Crawford will get the bulk of the edge snaps, with Adam Butler, JJ Pegues, Thomas Booker IV, Jonah Laulu, Tonka Hemingway and seventh-round draft pick Brandon Cleveland the primary interior players.

With the Raiders moving to a base 3-4 defense, managing that transition is the biggest challenge facing Leonard. The Raiders' interior line was drafted with the 4-3 in mind, so someone is going to have to step up and show they can anchor the middle at nose tackle. Nevertheless, it all looks much better on paper. Now it has to translate onto the field.

SPECIALISTS

The Raiders moved on from veteran placekicker Daniel Carlson, setting up a training camp battle between veteran Matt Gay and undrafted rookie Kansei Matsuzawa for the kicking duties. Gay's inconsistency gives Matsuzawa a real opportunity to win the job. He was a consensus All-American and a Lou Groza Award finalist in 2025 at Hawai'i.

AJ Cole is one of the best in the business at punter, hence the contract extension the Raiders gave him. Alex Ward and Tyler Duzansky will compete for the long-snapper role.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Raiders insist that they began this latest rebuild without the finish line in mind. They are determined not to skip any steps along the way. That was a big problem for them over the years and cost them valuable time and resources once they figured out they made rash, rushed moves, wrongly believing they were close to contention.

They will not determine success this year solely on wins or losses. This year will be about getting Mendoza ready to be their franchise-altering quarterback, including building a sufficient supporting cast.

2025 RESULTS (3-14)

Sept. 7	**AT NEW ENGLAND**	**W**	**20-13**
Sept. 15	L.A. Chargers	L	9-20
Sept. 21	at Washington	L	24-41
Sept. 28	Chicago	L	24-25
Oct. 5	at Indianapolis	L	6-40
Oct. 12	**TENNESSEE**	**W**	**20-10**
Oct. 19	at Kansas City	L	0-31
Nov. 2	Jacksonville (ot)	L	29-30
Nov. 6	at Denver	L	7-10
Nov. 17	Dallas	L	16-33
Nov. 23	Cleveland	L	10-24
Nov. 30	at L.A. Chargers	L	14-31
Dec. 7	Denver	L	17-24
Dec. 14	at Philadelphia	L	0-31
Dec. 21	at Houston	L	21-23
Dec. 28	N.Y. Giants	L	10-34
Jan. 4	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**14-12**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	245.2	32	16
RUSHING	77.5	32	16
PASSING	167.7	28	13
SCORING	14.2	32	16
THIRD DOWN %	33.8	28	14
POINTS/PLAY	0.254	32	16

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	317.8	14	9
RUSHING	116.8	17	12
PASSING	201.0	14	8
SCORING	25.4	25	13
INTERCEPTIONS	8	T25	14
SACKS	37	T18	9
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.403	23	12
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-7	T27	T14

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
GENO SMITH	448	302	3,025	19	17
KENNY PICKETT	45	28	188	1	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
ASHTON JEANTY	266	975	3.7	5
GENO SMITH	41	109	2.7	0
RAHEEM MOSTERT	22	104	4.7	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
BROCK BOWERS	64	680	10.6	7
TRE TUCKER	57	696	12.2	5
ASHTON JEANTY	55	346	6.3	5
MICHAEL MAYER	35	328	9.4	1
JAKOBI MEYERS	33	352	10.7	0

KICKING: Daniel Carlson, 22-27 FGs, 21-22 PATs, 87 points; **TACKLES:** Devin White, 174; Jeremy Chinn, 114 **SACKS:** Maxx Crosby, 10.0; Malcolm Koonce, 4.5 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Kyu Blu Kelly, 3; Isaiah Pola-Mao, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

IS MENDOZA'S TIME NOW? Plenty of previous teams have said they will be patient with their young quarterbacks after selecting them high in the draft. But when it gets right down to it, few teams actually exercise that restraint. Especially when it comes to the first pick overall. Will the Raiders be the exception to that rule? Adding Kirk Cousins certainly helps ease any need to rush him. But make no mistake, Raider Nation wants to see their new quarterback, and honestly, so does everyone in the organization. Don't be surprised if **Fernando Mendoza** is the Week 1 starter.

CANDICE WARD-IMAGN IMAGES

HERE TO STAY? Maxx Crosby wanted to be traded during the offseason; there is no disputing that. The Raiders obliged by moving him to the Baltimore Ravens, but a failed physical nixed the trade. Crosby has re-expressed his undying love for the only franchise he has known, but did anyone think he'd say anything different after the trade got squashed? The proof will be in how he reacts to another slow start. Also, the rest of the league will be monitoring the situation, ready to pounce if things go sideways. Lastly, the Raiders already showed a willingness to trade him. Who is to say they won't again if the right offer is extended?

EARN THE DECALS The Raiders began their offseason program wearing blank silver helmets. There were no trademark Raiders logos to be found. It appears that new head coach Klint Kubiak is setting a tone that everything has to be earned, including the honor of wearing one of the most iconic logos in all of sports. Let's face it — the Raiders have been down for years now, and a sense of entitlement has been in place for a while. Good on Kubiak to change that mindset.

SCOUTING THE RAIDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LAS VEGAS

"Fernando Mendoza has the arm talent and work ethic to be a good rookie quarterback. It's hard to argue with him as the top overall pick. … Klint Kubiak as a first-time head coach with a low-key personality has a large learning curve. … Not seeing enough talent at receiver to help Mendoza out. … Not a lot of tight ends better than Brock Bowers, and Michael Mayer is a good player, too. … Kolton Miller doesn't get much acclaim, but everyone knows he's a really good left tackle. … The huge investment in a fully guaranteed deal for center Tyler Linderbaum should give Mendoza a leg up as a rookie starter, whenever that happens. There's no one in the league like Linderbaum at center. … For now, Kirk Cousins is QB1, but obviously that is only going to last so long. … Ashton Jeanty hit his stride in December after a slow start. … Having Maxx Crosby back after a scuttled trade to the Ravens is a difference-maker. The defense without Crosby wouldn't have been the same. … Linebacker was a problem area, but it isn't anymore with the additions of Quay Walker and Nakobe Dean. Now, it's an asset. … Kwity Paye is a good addition to the defensive line. … Jermod McCoy is a bit of a medical risk, but if his knee comes around, he's worth the time it takes to get him all the way back. … Jeremy Chinn has the versatility teams covet at strong safety."

2026 RAIDERS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Cousins, Kirk	QB	6-3	205	14	Michigan State	FA-Atl-26	D4a-Was-12
12	O'Connell, Aidan	QB	6-3	206	3	Purdue	D4b-23	D4b-LV-23

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33	Collier, Chris	RB	5-10	203	2	Lock Haven	FA-24	FA-Bal-24
2	Jeanty, Ashton	RB	5-8	208	1	Boise State	D1-25	D1-LV-25
23	Laube, Dylan	RB	5-9	204	2	New Hampshire	D6-24	D6-LV-24

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Bech, Jack	WR	6-1	215	1	TCU	D2-25	D2-LV-25
89	Bowers, Brock	TE	6-3	235	2	Georgia	D1-24	D1-LV-24
13	Dorsett II, Phillip	WR	5-10	192	8	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	D1-Ind-15
34	Heyward, Connor	TE	6-0	230	4	Michigan State	FA-Pit-26	D6-Pit-22
4	Jackson, Shedrick	WR	6-1	198	2	Auburn	FA-24	FA-Cin-23
87	Mayer, Michael	TE	6-4	256	3	Notre Dame	D2-23	D2-LV-23
9	Nailor, Jalen	WR	5-11	199	4	Michigan State	FA-Min-26	D6b-Min-22
85	Okwuegbunam Jr., A.	TE	6-5	258	6	Missouri	FA-25	D4-Den-20
46	Runyon, Carter	TE	6-4	246	1	Towson	FA-25	FA-LV-25
88	Shorter, Justin	WR	6-4	227	3	Florida	FA-25	D5-Buf-23
80	Thomas, Ian	TE	6-3	253	8	Indiana	FA-Car-25	D4a-Car-18
10	Thornton Jr., Dont'e	WR	6-4	204	1	Tennessee	D4a-25	D4a-LV-25
1	Tucker, Tre	WR	5-8	182	3	Cincinnati	D3b-23	D3b-LV-23
81	Young, Dareke	WR	6-2	225	4	Lenoir-Rhyne	FA-Sea-26	D7b-Sea-22

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70	Burford, Spencer	OL	6-4	300	4	UTSA	FA-SF-26	D4-SF-22
71	Glaze, DJ	T	6-4	331	2	Maryland	D3-24	D3-LV-24
60	Grant, Charles	T	6-4	304	1	William & Mary	D3c-25	D3c-LV-25
65	Linderbaum, Tyler	C	6-2	305	4	Iowa	FA-Bal-26	D1b-Bal-22
56	Mafi, Atonio	G	6-3	330	3	UCLA	FA-25	D5-NE-23
61	Meredith, Jordan	C/G	6-2	301	3	WKU	FA-22	FA-LAR-21
74	Miller, Kolton	T	6-8	326	8	UCLA	D1-18	D1-LV-18
58	Powers-Johnson, J.	G/C	6-3	325	2	Oregon	D2-24	D2-LV-24
67	Putnam, Will	C	6-4	300	1	Clemson	FA-24	FA-LV-24
76	Rogers, Caleb	G	6-4	313	1	Texas Tech	D3b-25	D3b-LV-25
79	Tasi, Laki	OL	6-6	373	1	None	FA-25	FA-LV-25
78	Wagner, Dalton	T	6-8	318	1	Arkansas	FA-23	FA-LV-23

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99	Booker IV, Thomas	DT	6-3	301	3	Stanford	T-Phi-25	D5-Hou-22
69	Butler, Adam	DT	6-4	301	8	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-NE-17
98	Crosby, Maxx	DE	6-5	256	7	Eastern Michigan	D4a-19	D4a-LV-19
91	Harvey, Jahfari	DE	6-2	255	1	SMU	FA-25	FA-LV-25
97	Hemingway, Tonka	DT	6-2	284	1	South Carolina	D4b-25	D4b-LV-25
96	Laulu, Jonah	DT	6-5	289	2	Oklahoma	W-Ind-24	D7-Ind-24
68	Ma'ae, Treven	DT	6-3	291	1	Baylor	FA-25	FA-LV-25
93	Martin, Brodric	DT	6-5	322	2	WKU	W-Pit-25	D3b-Det-23
95	Paye, Kwity	DE	6-3	265	5	Michigan	FA-Ind-26	D1-Ind-21
92	Pegues, JJ	DT	6-2	325	1	Ole Miss	D6a-25	D6a-LV-25

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17	Dean, Nakobe	LB	5-11	231	4	Georgia	FA-Phi-26	D3-Phi-22
44	Eichenberg, Tommy	LB	6-2	234	2	Ohio State	D5-24	D5-LV-24
54	Jackson, Brennan	LB	6-4	263	2	Washington State	W-LAR-25	D5-LAR-24
51	Koonce, Malcolm	LB	6-2	243	5	Buffalo	D3a-21	D3a-LV-21
55	Lindenberg, Cody	LB	6-2	238	1	Minnesota	D7-25	D7-LV-25
57	McGrone, Cameron	LB	6-3	236	5	Michigan	FA-26	D5-NE-21
50	Olubi, Segun	LB	6-1	233	4	San Diego State	FA-Ind-26	FA-SF-22
7	Walker, Quay	LB	6-4	241	4	Georgia	FA-GB-26	D1a-GB-22

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
29	Anusiem, Chigozie	CB	6-1	200	1	Colorado State	FA-25	FA-Was-24
11	Chinn, Jeremy	S	6-3	220	6	Southern Illinois	FA-Was-25	D2b-Car-20
3	Johnson, Taron	CB	5-11	192	8	Weber State	T-Buf-26	D4-Buf-18
27	McCollum, Tristin	S	6-3	195	2	Sam Houston	W-Phi-25	FA-Hou-22
20	Pola-Mao, Isaiah	S	6-3	204	4	USC	FA-22	FA-LV-22
26	Porter, Darien	CB	6-2	196	1	Iowa State	D3a-25	D3a-LV-25
25	Richardson, Decamerion	CB	6-2	192	2	Mississippi State	D4-24	D4-LV-24
5	Stokes, Eric	CB	6-0	193	5	Georgia	FA-GB-25	D1-GB-21
41	Vance, Greedy	CB	5-9	177	1	USC	FA-25	FA-LV-25

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6	Cole, AJ	P	6-4	221	7	NC State	FA-19	FA-LV-19
14	Gay, Matt	K	6-0	232	6	Utah	FA-26	D5-TB-19
47	Ward, Alex	LS	6-4	248	3	UCF	FA-26	FA-LAR-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	9	Jalen Nailor	81	Dareke Young
WR	18	Jack Bech	19	Malik Benson (R)
WR	1	Tre Tucker	10	Dont'e Thornton Jr.
LT	74	Kolton Miller	71	DJ Glaze
LG	58	Jackson Powers-Johnson	70	Spencer Burford
C	65	Tyler Linderbaum	61	Jordan Meredith
RG	76	Caleb Rogers	66	Trey Zuhn III (R)
RT	60	Charles Grant	78	Dalton Wagner
TE	89	Brock Bowers	87	Michael Mayer
QB	15	Fernando Mendoza (R)	8	Kirk Cousins
RB	2	Ashton Jeanty	30	Mike Washington Jr. (R)

DEFENSE

DE	98	Maxx Crosby	42	Keyron Crawford (R)
NT	92	JJ Pegues	90	Brandon Cleveland (R)
DT	69	Adam Butler	97	Tonka Hemingway
OLB	95	Kwity Paye	48	Cian Sloane (R)
ILB	7	Quay Walker	55	Kody Lindenberg
ILB	17	Nakobe Dean	44	Tommy Eichenberg
OLB	51	Malcolm Koonce	54	Brennan Jackson
CB	5	Eric Stokes	28	Jermod McCoy (R)
CB	26	Darien Porter	25	Decamerion Richardson
S	11	Jeremy Chinn	20	Isaiah Pola-Mao
S	31	Treydan Stukes (R)	27	Tristin McCollum

SPECIALISTS

K	38	Kansei Matsuzawa (R)	KR	23	Dylan Laube
P	6	AJ Cole	PR	1	Tre Tucker

24.9% 24.9% of the Raiders' runs were stuffed for a loss or no gain, the highest in the league by 3.8 percentage points.

DRAFT CLASS GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Fernando Mendoza	QB	6-5	225	Indiana
2.	Treydan Stukes	S	6-2	200	Arizona
3.	Keyron Crawford	DE	6-4	253	Auburn
3.	Trey Zuhn III	G	6-7	319	Texas A&M
4.	Jermod McCoy	CB	6-0	193	Tennessee
4.	Mike Washington Jr.	RB	6-2	228	Arkansas
5.	Dalton Johnson	S	5-11	198	Arizona
5.	Hezekiah Masses	CB	6-1	185	Cal
6.	Malik Benson	WR	6-1	195	Oregon
7.	Brandon Cleveland	DT	6-4	315	NC State

Obviously, it all starts with Fernando Mendoza. If he hits, the Raiders finally have their franchise-changing quarterback. Treydan Stukes should get on the field immediately — if not as a starter, then certainly in the secondary rotation. Keyron Crawford has high-end pass-rush upside and should get important snaps right off the bat. The Raiders have invested five premium draft picks in their offensive line in the last three years, with the latest being Trey Zuhn III. He can play all over the line and will get a chance to win a starting role. Aside from Mendoza, though, no one comes in with more hype than Jermod McCoy, the star cornerback from Tennessee. He arrives with some concern, though, about his knee, which is reportedly showing some degenerative issues. If he can stay healthy, the Raiders might end up with the best cornerback in the draft.

LA CHARGERS

AFC WEST FORECAST

2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**ARIZONA**	**4:25**
SEPT. 20	**LAS VEGAS**	**4:05**
SEPT. 27	AT BUFFALO	1:00
OCT. 4	AT SEATTLE	4:25
OCT. 11	**DENVER**	**4:05**
OCT. 18	AT KANSAS CITY	4:25
OCT. 25	BYE	
NOV. 1	AT L.A. RAMS	4:05
NOV. 8	**HOUSTON**	**4:05**
NOV. 16	AT BALTIMORE	8:15
NOV. 22	**N.Y. JETS**	**4:05**
NOV. 29	**NEW ENGLAND**	**8:20**
DEC. 6	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
DEC. 13	AT LAS VEGAS	4:05
DEC. 17	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**8:15**
DEC. 27	AT MIAMI	1:00
TBD	**KANSAS CITY**	
TBD	AT DENVER	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021		9
2022	AFC PLAYOFFS	10
2023		5
2024	AFC PLAYOFFS	11
2025	AFC PLAYOFFS	11

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **JIM HARBAUGH**
Record With Team: **22-12**
Career Record: **66-31-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **MIKE McDANIEL**
Defensive Coordinator: **CHRIS O'LEARY**
Special Teams Coordinator: **RYAN FICKEN**
Passing Game Specialist: **ADAM GASE**
Quarterbacks: **SHANE DAY**
Running Backs: **MAX McCAFFREY**
Wide Receivers: **SANJAY LAL**
Tight Ends: **CHANDLER HENLEY**
Offensive Line: **BUTCH BARRY**
Defensive Line: **MIKE ELSTON**
Linebackers: **SEAN SPENCE**
Outside Linebackers: **DYLAN RONEY**
Defensive Backs: **STEVE CLINKSCALE**
Safeties: **ADAM FULLER**

The Chargers have undergone a fundamental transformation as they attempt to break through their postseason ceiling. Despite back-to-back 11-win seasons under head coach Jim Harbaugh, the team's offensive production had become predictable and stagnant when it mattered most, leading to the dismissal of offensive coordinator Greg Roman. In his place, the Bolts hired Mike McDaniel, moving away from an outdated approach toward a modern, high-speed system defined by motion and creativity. The central mission of this overhaul is to unlock the full potential of quarterback Justin Herbert, who remains one of the league's elite talents but is still searching for his first career playoff victory.

On the other side of the ball, the defense faces a transition of its own with coordinator Jesse Minter leaving for a head-coaching job with the Baltimore Ravens. New coordinator Chris O'Leary, a Minter protégé, will maintain the scheme's DNA, which is predicated on disguised post-snap rotations and simulated pressures.

OFFENSE

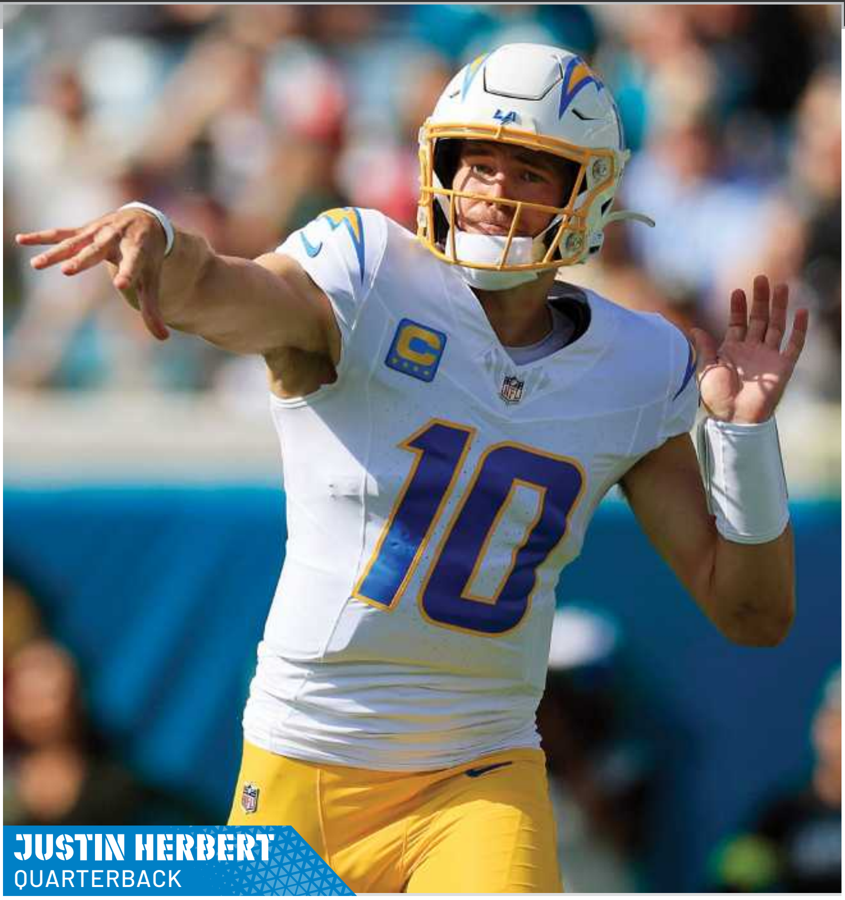
Herbert remains one of the NFL's most talented and physically gifted signal-callers. Even while playing through injuries, including a 2025 hand fracture, he has maintained high-level production, often willing the Chargers to success despite consistent defensive pressure. With McDaniel calling the plays, the goal is to create easy, high-percentage throws for Herbert while reducing the demands on straight-dropback pass protection.

The most visible change for the upcoming season is the influx of speed at the skill positions. For years, the Chargers have lacked a true vertical threat, but fourth-round pick Brenen Thompson changes that dynamic instantly with his 4.26 speed. He provides an immediate deep threat to stretch defenses and adds a proven yards-after-catch element to the offense. After a dip in production from his rookie season due to the presence of Keenan Allen last season, Ladd McConkey should serve as Herbert's go-to target and most reliable chain-mover. Quentin Johnston is expected to play a role as an outside threat designed to stretch defenses vertically and create big plays on slants, drags and screen passes to maximize yardage after the catch. Tre' Harris will serve as a run-blocker and physical receiver capable of making contested catches.

Omarion Hampton established himself as the lead running back following a promising yet injury-riddled rookie season. To complement Hampton's bruising style, the Chargers added Keaton Mitchell, whose elite acceleration provides the home-run threat this offense has desperately missed at the position. In an era when the fullback is a dying breed, newcomer Alec Ingold is the exception that proves the rule. His value isn't just in lead blocking but also in his ability to serve as a safety valve and check-down option.

At tight end, David Njoku and Charlie Kolar add some experience to a room with the young Oronde Gadsden. Njoku brings reliability as a receiver, who should see a heavy dose of work in the red zone. Kolar will act as a high-level secondary blocker while providing another outlet for Herbert. Gadsden will serve as a big slot mismatch who should dominate the middle of the field and in the red zone. The trio gives OC Mike McDaniel significant flexibility in 12- and 13-personnel packages.

Success in this new era begins in the trenches, specifically with the health of tackles Rashawn Slater and Joe Alt, both of whom suffered season-ending in-



JUSTIN HERBERT
QUARTERBACK

CORY PERRINE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

juries in 2025. This duo represents a premier bookend tandem in football. Slater's elite technical skills and footwork make him an ideal fit for the lateral demands of McDaniel's zone-stretch run game, while Alt provides the athleticism and physical power necessary to lock down the right side. While the edges are secure, the interior offensive line is the most retooled. The veteran addition of Tyler Biadasz at center is a stabilizing move, providing the high football IQ required to orchestrate the complex pre-snap motions that McDaniel uses. Reuniting with McDaniel, right guard Cole Strange brings familiarity with the system. The most watched position battle in camp is at left guard, where Trevor Penning is being pushed by second-round pick Jake Slaughter. Slaughter was exclusively a center at Florida, but the coaching staff believes he has a "fighting chance" to transition to guard and win the starting job.

DEFENSE

The interior defensive line relies on a rotation of stout players. Teair Tart, Jamaree Caldwell and new veteran addition Dalvin Tomlinson anchor as 2-gappers who can hold the point of attack against the run and occupy double-teams to free linebackers. Justin Eboigbe provides depth and versatility, as well as some interior pass-rush juice.

The edge rusher group is a strength. Khalil Mack, now 35, is an edge-setter and tactical disruptor whose veteran leadership anchors the front. Tuli Tuipulotu is the motor of this unit, an ascending power rusher who is coming off a double-digit sack season. First-round pick Akheem Mesidor adds another much-needed pass-rush element to this group following the free-agency departure of Odafe Oweh (Washington Commanders). Mesidor possesses a polished pass-rush arsenal and the versatility to rush from the inside and outside to get to the quarterback.

Daiyan Henley and Denzel Perryman project as the primary starters at linebacker, with Troy Dye, Del'Shawn Phillips and others in the mix. Henley brings sideline-to-sideline range and athleticism ideal for coverage, while Perryman is a thumper in the run game.

The back end features cornerbacks Tarheeb Still, Cam Hart and Donte Jackson. Hart and Still provide the secondary with youth, as well as the physical tools necessary for matching up against top receivers. Jackson complements them as a veteran whose ball-hawking instincts offer a reliable counterpoint.

The secondary remains the Derwin James Jr. show. James will continue to be the Swiss Army knife, playing most of his snaps as a nickel and dime 'backer, disrupting the run and negating opposing tight ends and slot receivers. When James is closer to the line of scrimmage, the Chargers need to bring on a third safety. Elijah Molden will be one of those players. The other spot will be a competition between Tony Jefferson, RJ Mickens and rookie Genesis Smith.

SPECIALISTS

Under special teams coordinator Ryan Ficken, the Chargers' unit aims for greater consistency after strong kicking but poor coverage rankings in recent seasons. Placekicker Cameron Dicker remains one of the NFL's most reliable weapons. His elite accuracy and strong leg provide confidence from beyond 50 yards. Punter JK Scott has excelled in hang time but must refine his field-flipping ability. Thompson will challenge Derius Davis for return specialist duties. While Davis has handled kickoff and punt returns with occasional big plays, his injury history makes him vulnerable. Thompson's straight-line speed gives him a strong upside in this role.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Chargers are poised for a strong 2026 season, with a realistic shot at 11-plus wins and a deep playoff run. Herbert finally has the perfect creative play-caller in McDaniel. If you pair that with Harbaugh's physical culture and a disruptive defense featuring key players like James, Mack and Tuipulotu, the Bolts have the balance to win tough games. As long as the team stays relatively healthy and the reconstructed interior offensive line jells, they can contend in a loaded AFC.

2025 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept. 5	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**27-21**
Sept 15	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**20-9**
Sept. 21	**DENVER**	**W**	**23-20**
Sept. 28	at N.Y. Giants	L	18-21
Oct. 5	Washington	L	10-27
Oct. 12	**AT MIAMI**	**W**	**29-27**
Oct. 19	Indianapolis	L	24-38
Oct. 23	**MINNESOTA**	**W**	**37-10**
Nov. 2	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**27-20**
Nov. 9	**PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**25-10**
Nov. 16	at Jacksonville	L	6-35
Nov. 30	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**31-14**
Dec. 8	**PHILADELPHIA (OT)**	**W**	**22-19**
Dec. 14	**AT KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**16-13**
Dec. 21	**AT DALLAS**	**W**	**34-17**
Dec. 27	Houston	L	16-20
Jan. 4	at Denver	L	3-19
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	at New England	L	3-16

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	333.8	12	6
RUSHING	121.6	12	5
PASSING	212.2	18	9
SCORING	21.6	20	10
THIRD DOWN %	45.8	3	1
POINTS/PLAY	0.321	26	12

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
TOTAL	285.2	5	4
RUSHING	105.4	8	6
PASSING	179.9	5	3
SCORING	20.0	9	6
INTERCEPTIONS	19	T3	T2
SACKS	45	T10	5
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.346	11	6
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+2	11	5

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JUSTIN HERBERT	512	340	3,727	26	13
TREY LANCE	57	27	226	0	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
KIMANI VIDAL	155	643	4.1	3
OMARION HAMPTON	124	545	4.4	4
JUSTIN HERBERT	83	498	6.0	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
KEENAN ALLEN	81	777	9.6	4
LADD MCCONKEY	66	789	12.0	6
QUENTIN JOHNSTON	51	735	14.4	8
ORONDE GADSDEN	49	664	13.6	3
OMARION HAMPTON	32	192	6.0	1

KICKING: Cameron Dicker, 38-41 FGs, 34-35 PATs, 148 points; **TACKLES:** Daiyan Henley, 103; Derwin James Jr., 94; **SACKS:** Tuli Tuipulotu, 13.0; Odafe Oweh, 7.5 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Donte Jackson, 4; Tony Jefferson, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MCDANIEL'S MOST-WANTED Offensive coordinator **Mike McDaniel** took his recruiting seriously this offseason. He printed actual "Wanted" posters featuring running back Keaton Mitchell and fullback Alec Ingold, then plastered them across general manager Joe Hortiz's office walls. The tactic worked, as both players were signed, giving McDaniel two trusted pieces from his days with the Miami Dolphins.

32 FLAVORS The Chargers cycled through 32 different offensive line combinations in 2025. Their most frequent five-man unit played together on only 16.5% of total snaps, a lack of continuity that Hortiz aggressively addressed for 2026 by adding seven new players to the mix through free agency and the draft.

SCRAMBLING TO NEW HEIGHTS Quarterback Justin Herbert showcased a new dimension last season, rushing for a career-high 498 yards. Under McDaniel, the plan for 2026 is to lower that number with improved protection, a robust run game, pre-snap motion, play-action and run-pass options (RPOs) to create easy completions, while still leveraging Herbert's arm for deep shots.

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER Edge Akheem Mesidor was 25 when the Chargers took him with the No. 22 overall pick in the 2026 NFL Draft, making him the third-oldest player ever taken in the first round. Born in Ottawa, Mesidor also made history as the first Canadian defensive player ever selected in Round 1.

SECOND CHANCES Head coach Jim Harbaugh believes that backup quarterback Trey Lance can turn his career around. Lance, who returned on a one-year deal, could be in a similar mold to Sam Darnold or Geno Smith as a former high-pick-turned-backup who then went on to have a resurgence as a starter. "He's at that age, right? I mean, that's the fat part of the bat right there for a quarterback. So I'm excited for his continued progress," Harbaugh said.

SCOUTING THE CHARGERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES

"Justin Herbert is one tough dude. He takes the big hits and keeps getting up, firing spirals. Herbert is as talented as anyone in the league. … With Joe Alt and Rashawn Slater as bookend tackles, the Chargers are all set. They just need a healthy year from them. … Tyler Biadasz is a nice fill-in at center. … Ladd McConkey should get more attention for his work as a classic slot receiver. McConkey has every trait for that position. … Quentin Johnston hasn't quite put it all together. … Brenen Thompson was a good fourth-round pick. … Jake Slaughter should help right away at left guard. … Oronde Gadsden has a lot of receiver in him as a pass-catching tight end. … Charlie Kolar is a combo tight end with skills. … Omarion Hampton is the real deal at tailback. Keaton Mitchell is very fast as a backup. … Teair Tart plays the game with an edge, but they clearly overpaid on his new deal. … Dalvin Tomlinson gives them a different nose tackle than they've had in recent years. … Tuli Tuipulotu does it all. … Daiyan Henley is one of the most athletic linebackers in the NFL. … Khalil Mack being back gives the defense a truly effective pass-rusher with a deep repertoire of moves and strength to match. He should be a great mentor to Akheem Mesidor. … Can't say there are many nickel-safeties like Derwin James Jr. He has a nose for the football and is extremely tough. Not overwhelmed by the rest of the secondary."

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 CHARGERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Herbert, Justin	QB	6-6	236	6	Oregon	D1a-20	D1a-LAC-20
5	Lance, Trey	QB	6-4	226	5	North Dakota State	FA-Dal-25	D1-SF-21
7	Uiagalelei, DJ	QB	6-4	252	1	Florida State	FA-25	FA-LAC-25

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Hampton, Omarion	RB	6-0	220	1	North Carolina	D1-25	D1-LAC-25
30	Ingold, Alec	FB	6-1	232	7	Wisconsin	FA-Mia-26	FA-LV-19
35	Johnson, Amar	RB	5-10	205	1	South Dakota State	FA-25	FA-GB-25
44	Matlock, Scott	FB	6-4	296	3	Boise State	D6-23	D6-LAC-23
34	Mitchell, Keaton	RB	5-8	190	3	East Carolina	FA-Bal-26	FA-Bal-23
32	Patterson, Jaret	RB	5-8	195	2	Buffalo	FA-23	FA-Was-21
28	Vidal, Kimani	RB	5-8	215	2	Troy	D6-24	D6-LAC-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
81	Campbell, Dalevon	WR	6-4	220	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
12	Davis, Derius	WR	5-8	165	3	TCU	D4-23	D4-LAC-23
86	Gadsden, Oronde	TE	6-5	236	1	Syracuse	D5b-25	D5b-LAC-25
87	Grimm, Luke	WR	6-0	190	1	Kansas	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
9	Harris, Tre'	WR	6-3	210	1	Ole Miss	D2-25	D2-LAC-25
82	Jackson, JaQuae	WR	6-1	184	2	Rutgers	FA-25	FA-Atl-24
1	Johnston, Quentin	WR	6-2	208	3	TCU	D1-23	D1-LAC-23
88	Kolar, Charlie	TE	6-6	265	4	Iowa State	FA-Bal-26	D4c-Bal-22
84	Lambert-Smith, K.	WR	6-1	182	1	Auburn	D5a-25	D5a-LAC-25
15	McConkey, Ladd	WR	6-0	185	2	Georgia	D2-24	D2-LAC-24
42	McLachlan, Tanner	TE	6-5	244	1	Arizona	FA-26	D6a-Cin-24
	Njoku, David	TE	6-4	246	9	Miami (Fla.)	FA-26	D1-Cle-17
41	Yassmin, Thomas	TE	6-5	251	1	Utah	FA-25	FA-Den-24

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
76	Alt, Joe	T	6-8	322	2	Notre Dame	D1-24	D1-LAC-24
74	Awosika, Kayode	G	6-3	322	4	Buffalo	FA-Det-26	FA-Phi-21
63	Biadasz, Tyler	C	6-3	316	6	Wisconsin	FA-Was-26	D4b-Dal-20
72	Cleveland, Ben	G	6-6	355	5	Georgia	FA-26	D3a-Bal-21
68	Kaltenberger, Josh	C	6-6	308	1	Maryland	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
75	Penning, Trevor	OL	6-7	325	4	Northern Iowa	T-NO-25	D1b-NO-22
79	Pipkins III, Trey	G/T	6-6	307	7	Sioux Falls	D3-19	D3-LAC-19
70	Slater, Rashawn	T	6-4	315	5	Northwestern	D1-21	D1-LAC-21
69	Strange, Cole	G	6-5	310	4	Chattanooga	FA-Mia-26	D1-NE-22
71	Taylor, Branson	G	6-6	330	1	Pitt	D6a-25	D6a-LAC-25

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99	Caldwell, Jamaree	DL	6-1	340	1	Oregon	D3-25	D3-LAC-25
92	Eboigbe, Justin	DL	6-5	292	2	Alabama	D4-24	D4-LAC-24
96	Edwards, TeRah	DL	6-2	305	1	Illinois	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
69	Fuga, Josh	DL	6-2	313	1	Virginia Tech	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
93	Tart, Teair	DL	6-2	315	6	FIU	FA-24	FA-Ten-20
94	Tomlinson, Dalvin	DL	6-3	335	9	Alabama	FA-Ari-26	D2-NYG-17

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Colson, Junior	LB	6-3	247	2	Michigan	D3-24	D3-LAC-24
48	Dupree, Bud	OLB	6-4	269	11	Kentucky	FA-24	D1-Pit-15
43	Dye, Troy	LB	6-3	225	6	Oregon	FA-Min-24	D4c-Min-20
0	Henley, Daiyan	LB	6-0	225	3	Washington State	D3-23	D3-LAC-23
50	Johnson, Emany	LB	6-2	218	1	Nevada	FA-24	FA-Dal-24
54	Kennard, Kyle	OLB	6-5	254	1	South Carolina	D4-25	D4-LAC-25
52	Mack, Khalil	OLB	6-3	269	12	Buffalo	T-Chi-22	D1-LV-14
6	Perryman, Denzel	LB	5-11	240	11	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Hou-24	D2-LAC-15
53	Phillips, Del'Shawn	LB	6-2	230	6	Illinois	FA-Hou-25	FA-Atl-19
97	Randolph, Garmon	OLB	6-8	260	1	Baylor	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
45	Tuipulotu, Tuli	OLB	6-3	266	3	USC	D2-23	D2-LAC-23
58	Wax, Marlowe	LB	6-1	236	1	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-LAC-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20	Hart, Cam	CB	6-2	207	2	Notre Dame	D5b-24	D5b-LAC-24
26	Jackson, Donte	CB	5-10	180	8	LSU	FA-Pit-25	D2-Car-18
3	James Jr., Derwin	S	6-2	215	8	Florida State	D1-18	D1-LAC-18
23	Jefferson, Tony	S	5-11	212	11	Oklahoma	FA-24	FA-Ari-13
33	Leonard, Deane	DB	6-0	195	4	Ole Miss	D7a-22	D7a-LAC-22
27	Mickens, RJ	S	6-0	210	1	Clemson	D6b-25	D6b-LAC-25
2	Molden, Elijah	DB	5-10	192	5	Washington	T-Ten-24	D3b-Ten-21
37	Oladokun, Jordan	CB	6-0	190	1	Bowling Green	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
46	Reed, Nikko	CB	5-10	180	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
39	Rogers, Eric	CB	6-2	189	1	Rutgers	FA-25	FA-LAC-25
29	Still, Tarheeb	CB	6-1	196	2	Maryland	D5a-24	D5a-LAC-24
37	Waxter, Isas	CB	6-1	205	1	Villanova	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
40	Williamson, Kendall	S	6-0	203	1	Stanford	FA-24	D7-Chi-23

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
59	Bowden, Peter	LS	6-2	242	1	Wisconsin	FA-25	FA-GB-24
11	Dicker, Cameron	K	6-1	216	4	Texas	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
47	Harris, Josh	LS	6-1	224	14	Auburn	FA-Atl-22	FA-Atl-12
16	Scott, JK	P	6-5	208	7	Alabama	FA-22	D5b-GB-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	15	Ladd McConkey	89	Brenen Thompson (R)
WR	1	Quentin Johnston	84	KeAndre Lambert-Smith
WR	9	Tre' Harris	12	Derius Davis
LT	70	Rashawn Slater	79	Trey Pipkins III
LG	66	Jake Slaughter (R)	75	Trevor Penning
C	63	Tyler Biadasz	66	Jake Slaughter (R)
RG	69	Cole Strange	74	Kayode Awosika
RT	76	Joe Alt	77	Travis Burke (R)
TE	86	Oronde Gadsden		David Njoku
QB	10	Justin Herbert	5	Trey Lance
RB	8	Omarion Hampton	34	Keaton Mitchell

DEFENSE

DE	94	Dalvin Tomlinson	99	Jamaree Caldwell
NT	93	Teair Tart	91	Nick Barrett (R)
DE	92	Justin Eboigbe	96	TeRah Edwards
OLB	52	Khalil Mack	90	Akheem Mesidor (R)
OLB	45	Tuli Tuipulotu	54	Kyle Kennard
ILB	0	Daiyan Henley	43	Troy Dye
ILB	6	Denzel Perryman	25	Junior Colson
CB	20	Cam Hart	29	Tarheeb Still
CB	26	Donte Jackson	33	Deane Leonard
S	3	Derwin James Jr.	23	Tony Jefferson
S	2	Elijah Molden	22	Genesis Smith (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	11	Cameron Dicker	KR	12	Derius Davis
P	16	JK Scott	PR	12	Derius Davis

43.3% Justin Herbert's 43.3% pressure rate per NFL Next Gen Stats was 1.5 percentage points higher than any other qualified quarterback in 2025.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Akheem Mesidor	Edge	6-3	260	Miami (Fla.)
2	Jake Slaughter	C	6-5	303	Florida
4	Brenen Thompson	WR	5-9	164	Mississippi State
4	Travis Burke	OT	6-9	325	Memphis
4	Genesis Smith	S	6-2	202	Arizona
5	Nick Barrett	DT	6-3	312	South Carolina
6	Logan Taylor	G	6-7	314	Boston College
6	Alex Harkey	G	6-5	313	Oregon

General manager Joe Hortiz orchestrated a haul that focused heavily on the trenches, with six of eight picks being linemen. Akheem Mesidor provides an immediate rotational pass-rush boost. Jake Slaughter is highly experienced and technical and is expected to compete for the starting left guard spot immediately. Brenen Thompson adds elite speed to the wide receiver room and fits new coordinator Mike McDaniel's offense perfectly for yards after the catch. Travis Burke adds depth at tackle. Genesis Smith provides much-needed youth at safety. Nick Barrett is a stout run-stopper, strengthening the interior defensive line rotation.

NFC PREDICTIONS

PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
2. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
3. CHICAGO BEARS
4. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
5. LOS ANGELES RAMS
6. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
7. GREEN BAY PACKERS

WILD CARD WEEKEND

EAGLES OVER PACKERS

BEARS OVER 49ERS

RAMS OVER BUCCANEERS

DIVISIONAL ROUND

SEAHAWKS OVER RAMS

EAGLES OVER BEARS

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

SEAHAWKS OVER EAGLES

SUPER BOWL LXI

BILLS OVER SEAHAWKS

NFC EAST

1 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

2 DALLAS COWBOYS

3 WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

4 NEW YORK GIANTS

NFC NORTH

1 CHICAGO BEARS

2 GREEN BAY PACKERS

3 DETROIT LIONS

4 MINNESOTA VIKINGS

NFC SOUTH

1 TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

2 CAROLINA PANTHERS

3 ATLANTA FALCONS

4 NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

NFC WEST

1 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

2 LOS ANGELES RAMS

3 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

4 ARIZONA CARDINALS

NFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Seattle Seahawks
2. Los Angeles Rams
3. Philadelphia Eagles
4. Chicago Bears
5. San Francisco 49ers
6. Green Bay Packers
7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
8. Detroit Lions
9. Dallas Cowboys
10. Washington Commanders
11. Carolina Panthers
12. Minnesota Vikings
13. Atlanta Falcons
14. New Orleans Saints
15. New York Giants
16. Arizona Cardinals

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year

JAHMYR GIBBS RB, LIONS

Defensive Player of the Year

MICAH PARSONS OLB, PACKERS

Comeback Player of the Year

MALIK NABERS WR, GIANTS

Offensive Rookie of the Year

JEREMIYAH LOVE RB, CARDINALS

Defensive Rookie of the Year

RUEBEN BAIN JR. OLB, BUCCANEERS

Coach of the Year

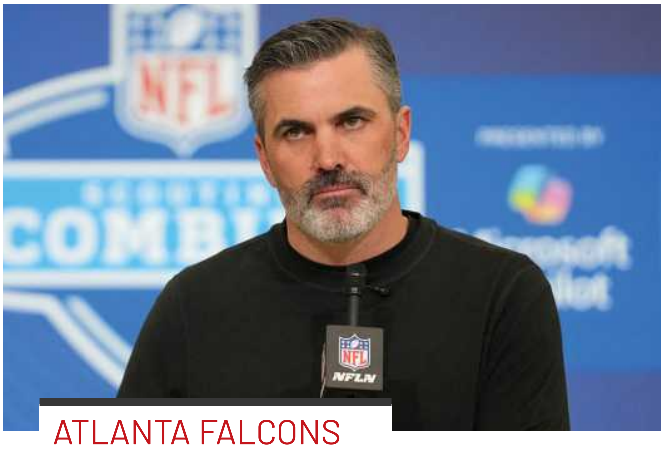
BEN JOHNSON BEARS

NFC COACHING CAROUSEL

HEAD COACHES

ARIZONA CARDINALS

New: Mike LaFleur
Old: Jonathan Gannon



ATLANTA FALCONS

New: Kevin Stefanski
Old: Raheem Morris

NEW YORK GIANTS

New: John Harbaugh
Old: Brian Daboll

COORDINATORS

ARIZONA CARDINALS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Nathaniel Hackett
Old: Drew Petzing

ATLANTA FALCONS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Tommy Rees
Old: Zac Robinson

CHICAGO BEARS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Press Taylor
Old: Declan Doyle

DALLAS COWBOYS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Christian Parker
Old: Matt Eberflus

DETROIT LIONS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Drew Petzing
Old: John Morton

GREEN BAY PACKERS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Jonathan Gannon
Old: Jeff Hafley

LOS ANGELES RAMS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Nathan Scheelhaase
Old: Matt LaFleur

NEW YORK GIANTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Matt Nagy
Old: Mike Kafka

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Dennard Wilson
Old: Shane Bowen

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Sean Mannion
Old: Kevin Patullo

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Raheem Morris
Old: Robert Saleh

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Brian Fleury
Old: Klint Kubiak

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Zac Robinson
Old: Josh Grizzard

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: David Blough
Old: Kliff Kingsbury

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
New: Daronte Jones
Old: Joe Whitt Jr.

LAFLEUR: MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC; STEFANSKI: KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; HARBAUGH: KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; HACKETT: MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC; PARKER: CHRIS JONES-IMAGN IMAGES; NAGY: MARK KONEZNY-IMAGN IMAGES; MORRIS: MATTHEW HINTON-IMAGN IMAGES

COWBOYS

NFC EAST FORECAST
2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT N.Y. GIANTS	8:20
SEPT. 20	**WASHINGTON**	**4:25**
SEPT. 27	**BALTIMORE** (RIO)	**4:25**
OCT. 4	AT HOUSTON	1:00
OCT. 8	**TAMPA BAY**	**8:15**
OCT. 18	AT GREEN BAY	8:20
OCT. 26	AT PHILADELPHIA	8:15
NOV. 1	**ARIZONA**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
NOV. 15	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**4:25**
NOV. 22	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
NOV. 26	**PHILADELPHIA**	**4:30**
DEC. 7	AT SEATTLE	8:15
DEC. 13	BYE	
DEC. 20	AT L.A. RAMS	4:25
DEC. 27	**JACKSONVILLE**	**8:20**
JAN. 3	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**1:00**
TBD	AT WASHINGTON	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 NFC PLAYOFFS	12
2022 NFC PLAYOFFS	12
2023 NFC PLAYOFFS	12
2024	7
2025	7

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **BRIAN SCHOTTENHEIMER**
Record With Team: **7-9-1**
Career Record: **7-9-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **KLAYTON ADAMS**
Defensive Coordinator: **CHRISTIAN PARKER**
Special Teams Coordinator: **NICK SORENSEN**
Quarterbacks: **STEVE SHIMKO**
Pass Game Specialist: **KEN DORSEY**
Running Backs: **DERRICK FOSTER**
Wide Receivers: **JUNIOR ADAMS**
Tight Ends: **LUNDA WELLS**
Offensive Line: **CONOR RILEY**
Defensive Line: **MARCUS DIXON**
Outside Linebackers: **CHIDERA UZO-DIRIBE**
Inside Linebackers: **SCOTT SYMONS**
Secondary: **RYAN SMITH**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **DERRICK ANSLEY**

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones has repeatedly said he would write an “embarrassing” check to win another Super Bowl. Yet, he never does. Since 2013, the Cowboys have not participated in the first wave of free agency.

Despite Jones’ vow to “bust the budget” in the 2026 offseason, the Cowboys again stood pat for most of free agency. Their signings were underwhelming, with the team adding safety Jalen Thompson, cornerback Cobie Durant, offensive lineman Matt Hennessy, safety P.J. Locke, defensive tackle Otito Ogbonnia and quarterback Sam Howell. The Cowboys also traded with the Green Bay Packers for edge rusher Rashan Gary, but they came up short in an attempted trade for Las Vegas Raiders edge rusher Maxx Crosby.

After ranking last in the NFL in scoring defense, giving up a franchise-record 511 points, the Cowboys fired defensive coordinator Matt Eberflus, replacing him with former Philadelphia Eagles assistant Christian Parker, and Jones is counting on Parker to make the Cowboys better defensively.

“I feel very, very good about it,” Jones says. “We have nowhere but up to go on defense. It’s not anyone’s fault at all, but we’re going to almost assuredly be much better, and I think we are betting on us improving on offense. That ought to get us with a better feeling.”

OFFENSE

The Cowboys return 10 of 11 starters from an offense that ranked second in yards (391.9) and seventh in points (27.7) per game. Head coach Brian Schottenheimer should have an even better unit in his second year as the play-caller.

Dak Prescott has ranked as a top-10 quarterback in the league when healthy. He played all 17 games for the second time in three years, with his 4,552 passing yards in 2025 ranking as the second-most of his career, and he made his fourth Pro Bowl. Prescott, though, is only 2-5 in the postseason and, in 10 years, hasn’t come close to joining Roger Staubach and Troy Aikman in the upper echelon of Cowboys quarterbacks. At 33, and with two years of guaranteed money left on his contract, Prescott doesn’t have much time left to make it happen. The Cowboys traded for Joe Milton III in 2025 to serve as Prescott’s backup, but Dallas isn’t convinced it can win with him if Prescott is injured. Otherwise, the Cowboys wouldn’t have signed veteran backup Howell, who will compete with Milton for the No. 2 job.

The Cowboys hit the jackpot by signing running back Javonte Williams to a prove-it deal in the 2025 offseason. Williams’ 1,201 rushing yards were the most by a Cowboy since Ezekiel Elliott ran for 1,357 yards in 2019. Williams’ run of 66 yards was the longest for the Cowboys since DeMarco Murray had a 91-yarder in 2011. They re-signed Williams in free agency, and he will continue as their bell cow. Dallas failed to get much out of rookies Jaydon Blue and Phil Mafah last season, but Malik Davis, in his fourth season, established himself as a reliable backup and occasional special-teamer. Hunter Luepke remains the fullback, having played 21% of the snaps last season.

The 2025 trade for George Pickens gave the Cowboys one of the best receiving duos in the NFL last season. CeeDee Lamb remains the team’s No. 1 wide receiver, but Pickens played three more games and had more targets (137 to 117), more receptions (93 to 75), more yards (1,429 to 1,077) and more touchdowns (nine to three). Ryan Flournoy won the role as the third wide receiver, and KaVontae Turpin is always a threat in his limited offensive reps.

CEEDEE LAMB
WIDE RECEIVER

BILL STREICHER-IMAGN IMAGES

Tight end Jake Ferguson rebounded from a down year in 2024 to set career highs in catches (82) and touchdowns (eight). He is one of Prescott's most trusted weapons. The disappointing Luke Schoonmaker is likely in his final season in Dallas. Brevyn Spann-Ford could replace him as the team's second tight end.

The Cowboys return their top six offensive linemen. The only questions: Who plays left tackle, and who plays left guard? Tyler Smith, the team's best offensive lineman, will play one of the spots. He prefers to remain at left guard, but the Cowboys believe he is their best left tackle. Smith, a three-time Pro Bowl guard, started the final three games of 2025 at left tackle with Tyler Guyton out with an ankle injury. The Cowboys believe T.J. Bass is a better left guard than Guyton is a left tackle, so the team might ask Smith to play left tackle this season. Center Cooper Beebe, right guard Tyler Booker and right tackle Terence Steele return, but Hennessy, who has 64 career starts, could compete with Beebe for the starting job.

DEFENSE

For the fourth time in four seasons, the Cowboys have a new defensive coordinator, turning to the 34-year-old Parker, the secondary coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. Parker is switching the Cowboys to a 3-4 base. Quinnen Williams and Kenny Clark, whom the Cowboys acquired in trades last season, will start at the end spots, with free-agent signee Ogbonnia at nose. The trio should make the Cowboys stout against the run. They traded defensive lineman Osa Odighizuwa a year after re-signing him to a big deal, and they also moved on from Solomon Thomas. Dallas drafted Alabama's LT Overton in the fourth round.

The Cowboys had difficulty mounting a consistent pass rush after trading Micah Parsons to the Green Bay Packers prior to last season. The Cowboys expect Donovan Ezeiruaku, who had only two sacks as a rookie while playing 55% of the snaps, to show vast improvement. He will start opposite Gary, whom the Cowboys acquired in an offseason trade with the Packers. Gary essentially replaces Jadeveon Clowney, who had a better 2025 than Gary. Sam Williams returns as the Cowboys' top backup edge rusher, and they moved Marist Liufau from inside linebacker to outside linebacker. First-round pick Malachi Lawrence will compete for playing time in the rotation.

The team's biggest weakness is inside linebacker, where DeMarvion Overshown and Shemar James are the top returning options. The Cowboys traded with the San Francisco 49ers for Dee Winters, who will compete with James for a starting job, and they will move third-round pick Jaishawn Barham to an off-ball linebacker spot.

The Cowboys have turned over their secondary in two years. DaRon Bland and Shavon Revel Jr. are the starting corners, with Reddy Steward at nickel. Bland has played only 19 games and made only one interception the past two seasons combined after leading the league with nine picks and a league-record five return touchdowns in 2023. Malik Hooker returns at free safety, and the Cowboys' top free-agent signing, Thompson, will take over at strong safety. The Cowboys have never won a Super Bowl without a star safety, and they got that with first-round draft pick Caleb Downs. Downs, who reminds the team of Darren Woodson, will play all over the field.

SPECIALISTS

The Cowboys have one of the best kickers (Brandon Aubrey), best punters (Bryan Anger), best long-snappers (Trent Sieg) and best returners (Turpin) in the game. The team made Aubrey the highest-paid player at his position, which he earned with the strongest leg in football.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Cowboys have a 5-13 playoff record since they last won the Super Bowl to end the 1995 season. That's also the last time they reached the NFC Championship Game, which is the longest drought in the conference. The Cowboys could contend for a playoff berth this season, but their defense is unlikely to be good enough to get them where Jones insists he wants to go.

2025 RESULTS (7-9-1)

Sept. 4	at Philadelphia	L	20-24
Sept. 14	**N.Y. GIANTS (OT)**	**W**	**40-37**
Sept. 21	at Chicago	L	14-31
Sept. 28	Green Bay (ot)	T	40-40
Oct. 5	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**37-22**
Oct. 12	at Carolina	L	27-30
Oct. 19	**WASHINGTON**	**W**	**44-22**
Oct. 26	at Denver	L	24-44
Nov. 3	Arizona	L	17-27
Nov. 17	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**33-16**
Nov. 23	**PHILADELPHIA**	**W**	**24-21**
Nov. 27	**KANSAS CITY**	**W**	**31-28**
Dec. 4	at Detroit	L	30-44
Dec. 14	Minnesota	L	26-34
Dec. 21	L.A. Chargers	L	17-34
Dec. 25	**AT WASHINGTON**	**W**	**30-23**
Jan. 4	at N.Y. Giants	L	17-34

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	391.9	2	2
RUSHING	125.6	9	6
PASSING	266.3	2	2
SCORING	27.7	7	4
THIRD DOWN %	41.1	12	6
POINTS/PLAY	0.421	9	4

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	377.0	30	15
RUSHING	125.5	23	11
PASSING	251.5	32	16
SCORING	30.1	32	16
INTERCEPTIONS	6	T29	T15
SACKS	35	T22	T12
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.490	32	16
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-9	T29	T14

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
DAK PRESCOTT	600	404	4,552	30	10
JOE MILTON III	24	15	183	1	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JAVONTE WILLIAMS	252	1,201	4.8	11
MALIK DAVIS	52	250	4.8	2
DAK PRESCOTT	53	177	3.3	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
GEORGE PICKENS	93	1,429	15.4	9
JAKE FERGUSON	82	600	7.3	8
CEEDEE LAMB	75	1,077	14.4	3
RYAN FLOURNOY	40	475	11.9	4
JAVONTE WILLIAMS	35	137	3.9	2

KICKING: Brandon Aubrey, 36-42 FGs, 47-48 PATs, 155 points; **TACKLES:** Shemar James, 91; Kenneth Murray Jr., 81; **SACKS:** Jadeveon Clowney, 8.5; James Houston, 5.5; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Donovan Wilson, 2; 4 players tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BLAME IT ON RIO The Cowboys are giving up a home game for the first time in their history. They will play the Baltimore Ravens in Rio de Janeiro in Week 3 in the NFL's first regular-season game in Rio. The Cowboys' only other international game came in London in 2014 against the Jacksonville Jaguars.

SWITCHING IT UP The Cowboys have played a 4-3 defense for most of their history; all five Super Bowl wins came with a 4-3. They will play a 3-4 base defense this season, though, under new defensive coordinator **Christian Parker**. It marks the first time the Cowboys have played a 3-4 base defense since 2012 under Rob Ryan. DeMarcus Ware had 11.5 sacks that season. The 2005 season under Bill Parcells was the first time the Cowboys had ever used a 3-4 defense. In 2013, new defensive coordinator Monte Kiffin switched the team back to a 4-3. The Cowboys played a hybrid system in 2020 in Mike Nolan's one season.

CHRIS JONES-IMAGN IMAGES

MAXX-ING OUT The Cowboys made three different offers for edge rusher Maxx Crosby. Dallas initially offered the 20th overall pick in the first round of the 2026 draft and defensive tackle Osa Odighizuwa. The second offer was the 12th overall pick in the first round and a third-round pick. The third: the 12th overall pick and a second-round pick. The Las Vegas Raiders got two first-round picks from the Ravens for Crosby before Baltimore balked after a failed physical. Dallas eventually traded Odighizuwa to the San Francisco 49ers for a third-round pick.

MISSING PIECE The Cowboys have never won a Super Bowl without a Hall of Fame-caliber safety on their roster. They had Hall of Famer Cliff Harris for their two Super Bowl wins in the 1970s and Darren Woodson for their three Super Bowl titles in the 1990s, though Woodson was a rookie in 1992. They drafted Caleb Downs with the 11th overall pick and believe he is their next Woodson.

SCOUTING THE COWBOYS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DALLAS

"A full season from Dak Prescott is significant. He's one of the most pinpoint passers in the league. His timing and chemistry with George Pickens have improved significantly. … I get why Jerry Jones wanted Pickens back on the franchise tag. Make him continue to prove he can fit into their team concept and keep maturing. Everyone knows they're on track to ultimately pay Pickens, as long as he stays on this track. … CeeDee Lamb remains the straw that stirs the drink for the Cowboys' passing game. … The Cowboys' guards are the envy of the league: Tyler Smith and Tyler Booker. … From a receiving standpoint, tight ends Jake Ferguson and Luke Schoonmaker are upper echelon as a tandem. … Retaining Javonte Williams just made too much sense. … Tyler Guyton has gotten better at left tackle, as has Terence Steele on the right side. … Rashan Gary should benefit from this change of scenery. … Quinnen Williams gave the defense a boost after the trade from the Jets. … DeMarvion Overshown switched agents recently to David Mulugheta. Overshown is looking for that second deal, preferably in Dallas. … Kenneth Murray Jr. was really bad at run reads and fits last season. … The trade for Dee Winters should bolster the linebacker corps. … Drafting Ohio State safety Caleb Downs is a game-changer playing next to Jalen Thompson. … Malik Hooker is ultra-reliable. … DaRon Bland has the instincts and the hands. … As the highest-paid kicker in the league, Brandon Aubrey has given Dallas a consistent scoring presence."

2026 COWBOYS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Howell, Sam	QB	6-1	225	4	North Carolina	FA-Phi-26	D5a-Was-22
10	Milton III, Joe	QB	6-5	236	2	Tennessee	T-NE-25	D6b-NE-24
4	Prescott, Dak	QB	6-2	230	10	Mississippi State	D4b-16	D4b-Dal-16

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30	Abanikanda, Israel	RB	5-10	217	2	Pitt	FA-25	D5-NYJ-23
23	Blue, Jaydon	RB	5-9	198	1	Texas	D5a-25	D5a-Dal-25
43	Davis, Malik	RB	5-10	205	2	Florida	FA-25	FA-Dal-22
40	Luepke, Hunter	FB	6-1	250	3	North Dakota State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
37	Mafah, Phil	RB	6-1	232	1	Clemson	D7b-25	D7b-Dal-25
33	Williams, Javonte	RB	5-10	222	5	North Carolina	FA-Den-25	D2-Den-21

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
80	Campbell, Parris	WR	6-0	210	7	Ohio State	FA-Phi-25	D2-Ind-19
84	Fairweather, Rivaldo	TE	6-3	249	1	Auburn	FA-25	FA-Dal-25
85	Fant, Princeton	TE	6-2	245	2	Tennessee	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
87	Ferguson, Jake	TE	6-5	250	4	Wisconsin	D4-22	D4-Dal-22
19	Flournoy, Ryan	WR	6-1	205	2	SE Missouri State	D6-24	D6-Dal-24
80	Holden, Traeshon	WR	6-2	208	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Dal-25
15	Johnson, Tyler	WR	6-1	208	5	Minnesota	FA-NYJ-26	D5-TB-20
88	Lamb, CeeDee	WR	6-2	198	6	Oklahoma	D1-20	D1-Dal-20
81	Mingo, Jonathan	WR	6-2	225	3	Ole Miss	T-Car-24	D2-Car-23
3	Pickens, George	WR	6-3	200	4	Georgia	T-Pit-25	D2-Pit-22
86	Schoonmaker, Luke	TE	6-5	250	3	Michigan	D2-23	D2-Dal-23
89	Spann-Ford, Brevyn	TE	6-6	265	2	Minnesota	FA-24	FA-Dal-24
9	Turpin, KaVontae	WR	5-7	158	4	TCU	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
84	Valdes-Scantling, M.	WR	6-4	206	8	South Florida	FA-Pit-26	D5-GB-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66	Bass, T.J.	G	6-4	320	3	Oregon	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
56	Beebe, Cooper	C	6-3	320	2	Kansas State	D3a-24	D3a-Dal-24
52	Booker, Tyler	G	6-5	330	1	Alabama	D1-25	D1-Dal-25
69	Cornelius, Ajani	T	6-5	318	1	Oregon	D6-25	D6-Dal-25
60	Guyton, Tyler	T	6-7	325	2	Oklahoma	D1-24	D1-Dal-24
72	Hennessy, Matt	C	6-3	315	6	Temple	FA-SF-26	D3-Atl-20
79	Johnson, Marcellus	T	6-4	307	1	Missouri	FA-25	FA-NYG-24
76	Keegan, Trevor	G	6-6	320	2	Michigan	W-Phi-25	D5c-Phi-24
61	Leverett, Nick	OL	6-3	310	5	NC Central	FA-25	FA-TB-20
73	Smith, Tyler	G	6-5	328	4	Tulsa	D1-22	D1-Dal-22
78	Steele, Terence	T	6-6	320	6	Texas Tech	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
71	Thomas, Nate	T	6-5	330	2	Louisiana	D7a-24	D7a-Dal-24

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
98	Bullard, Jonathan	DE	6-3	290	10	Florida	FA-NO-26	D3-Chi-16
97	Clark, Kenny	DT	6-3	314	10	UCLA	T-GB-25	D1-GB-16
53	Houston, James	DE	6-1	248	4	Jackson State	FA-25	D6-Det-22
91	Land, Isaiah	DE	6-3	245	3	Florida A&M	FA-25	FA-Dal-23
96	Odeleye, Adedayo	DE	6-5	283	1	Loughborough (UK)	FA-25	FA-Hou-22
91	Ogbonnia, Otito	DT	6-4	320	4	UCLA	FA-LAC-26	D5-LAC-22
93	Toia, Jay	DT	6-2	340	1	UCLA	D7a-25	D7a-Dal-25
90	Wheat, Tyrus	DE	6-2	260	3	Mississippi State	FA-Det-26	FA-Dal-23
92	Williams, Quinnen	DE	6-3	303	7	Alabama	T-NYJ-25	D1-NYJ-19
54	Williams, Sam	DE	6-4	260	4	Ole Miss	D2-22	D2-Dal-22

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45	Barron, Justin	LB	6-4	235	1	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-Dal-25
6	Ezeiruaku, Donovan	LB	6-2	255	1	Boston College	D2-25	D2-Dal-25
7	Gary, Rashan	LB	6-5	277	7	Michigan	T-GB-26	D1a-GB-19
50	James, Shemar	LB	6-1	235	1	Florida	D5b-25	D5b-Dal-25
35	Liufau, Marist	LB	6-2	238	2	Notre Dame	D3b-24	D3b-Dal-24
0	Overshown, DeMarvion	LB	6-3	230	3	Texas	D3-23	D3-Dal-23
42	Robinson, Curtis	LB	6-3	235	4	Stanford	FA-SF-26	FA-Den-21
53	Winters, Dee	LB	5-11	227	3	TCU	T-SF-26	D6-SF-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36	Ballentine, Corey	DB	5-11	196	7	Washburn	FA-25	D6-NYG-19
14	Bell, Markquese	S	6-2	215	4	Florida A&M	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
26	Bland, DaRon	CB	6-2	202	4	Fresno State	D5b-22	D5b-Dal-22
25	Bridges, Trikweze	CB	6-2	200	1	Florida	W-LAC-25	D7-LAC-25
31	Butler, Josh	CB	6-0	192	2	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
21	Carson, Caelen	CB	6-0	198	2	Wake Forest	D5-24	D5-Dal-24
48	Childress, Zion	CB	5-11	203	1	Kentucky	FA-25	FA-Dal-25
38	Clark, Alijah	S	6-1	200	1	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-Dal-25
2	Durant, Cobie	CB	5-11	181	4	South Carolina St.	FA-LAR-26	D4-LAR-22
28	Hooker, Malik	S	6-1	215	9	Ohio State	FA-21	D1-Ind-17
15	Kendrick, Derion	CB	6-0	199	4	Georgia	FA-LAR-26	D6b-LAR-22
1	Locke, P.J.	S	5-10	202	6	Texas	FA-Den-26	FA-Pit-19
34	Revel Jr., Shavon	CB	6-2	198	1	East Carolina	D3-25	D3-Dal-25
27	Steward, Reddy	CB	5-11	178	1	Troy	W-Min-25	FA-Chi-24
34	Thompson, Jalen	S	5-11	190	7	Washington State	FA-Ari-26	SD5-Ari-19
32	Wood, Julius	S	6-1	193	2	East Carolina	FA-25	FA-Dal-24

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5	Anger, Bryan	P	6-3	214	14	Cal	FA-21	D3-Jac-12
17	Aubrey, Brandon	K	6-3	218	3	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
44	Sieg, Trent	LS	6-3	255	8	Colorado State	FA-LV-23	FA-Bal-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	88	CeeDee Lamb	80	Parris Campbell
WR	3	George Pickens	81	Jonathan Mingo
WR	19	Ryan Flournoy	9	KaVontae Turpin
LT	73	Tyler Smith	60	Tyler Guyton
LG	66	T.J. Bass	73	Tyler Smith
C	56	Cooper Beebe	72	Matt Hennessy
RG	52	Tyler Booker	76	Trevor Keegan
RT	78	Terence Steele	67	Drew Shelton (R)
TE	87	Jake Ferguson	86	Luke Schoonmaker
QB	4	Dak Prescott	16	Sam Howell
RB	33	Javonte Williams	43	Malik Davis

DEFENSE

DE	92	Quinnen Williams	90	Tyrus Wheat
NT	91	Otito Ogbonnia	93	Jay Toia
DE	97	Kenny Clark	99	LT Overton (R)
SLB	6	Donovan Ezeiruaku	54	Sam Williams
ILB	0	DeMarvion Overshown	45	Justin Barron
ILB	53	Dee Winters	50	Shemar James
WLB	7	Rashan Gary	57	Malachi Lawrence (R)
CB	34	Shavon Revel Jr.	25	Trikweze Bridges
CB	26	DaRon Bland	2	Cobie Durant
NB	13	Caleb Downs (R)	27	Reddy Steward
SS	34	Jalen Thompson	14	Markquese Bell
FS	28	Malik Hooker	1	P.J. Locke

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Brandon Aubrey	KR	9	KaVontae Turpin
P	5	Bryan Anger	PR	9	KaVontae Turpin

+0.06

Cowboys opponents ran for plus-0.06 EPA per rush in 2025, second highest in the league behind only the Giants.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Caleb Downs	S	5-11	206	Ohio State
1	Malachi Lawrence	OLB	6-4	253	UCF
3	Jaishawn Barham	ILB	6-3	240	Michigan
4	Drew Shelton	OT	6-5	313	Penn State
4	Devin Moore	CB	6-3	198	Florida
4	LT Overton	DL	6-3	274	Alabama
7	Anthony Smith	WR	6-3	189	East Carolina

New defensive coordinator Christian Parker got plenty of reinforcements in the draft. The Cowboys used five of seven picks on defenders. They traded up one spot to draft a safety in the first round for the first time since 2002 (when Roy Williams was the No. 8 overall pick). Owner Jerry Jones called Caleb Downs a player capable of being "a quarterback of the defense." The Swiss Army knife can play deep safety, nickel and outside corner. He will stay on the field in the team's substitution packages. Malachi Lawrence will need time to develop as an outside linebacker, but the Cowboys expect him to be part of their pass-rush rotation this season. Jaishawn Barham will move to inside linebacker, where the Cowboys lack depth, and LT Overton will play on the defensive line. Devin Moore could compete for a backup role, and the Cowboys could groom Drew Shelton to eventually replace Terence Steele at right tackle.

NY GIANTS

NFC EAST FORECAST

4

After a decade-plus of mostly misery, the Giants knew they needed more than another fresh start. They needed someone to come in and bring them instant credibility, to restore all the hope that they had lost. They didn't need a new head coach. They needed a savior.

That's why they moved so fast when the Baltimore Ravens let John Harbaugh go.

Harbaugh is, by far, the most accomplished head coach the Giants have ever hired, coming to New York after 18 mostly successful seasons with the Ravens. And the moment he arrived, the whole feel of the organization changed. It wasn't much different than when the Giants hired Tom Coughlin 22 years earlier.

They all knew immediately that a winner was in charge.

The only question now is whether that winner has enough talent on the team to win right away. The Giants already found their franchise quarterback in Jaxson Dart and surrounded him with better talent than they've had in a decade. Even the defense has impressive pieces, especially pass-rushers, despite how badly it played last year.

The Giants believe Harbaugh can put it all together and can reverse the fortunes of a franchise that has lost double-digit games in 10 of the past 12 seasons. They don't think they're ready to be a Super Bowl contender. But they sure do believe Harbaugh is the right man to at least get them into the playoff chase again.

OFFENSE

Harbaugh isn't the only reason for optimism. Dart is a big part of it, too. He proved that he had the ability to be a dual-threat star with his performance on a bad team last year. He was particularly dangerous on the move, whether running or passing. But he wasn't reckless. He threw only five interceptions in his 12 starts.

With better coaching and better weapons, the team expects him to take a big leap, especially if Malik Nabers, his No. 1 receiver, returns healthy from his torn ACL. The 6-foot, 200-pounder has shown that he's an explosive receiver who can run every route. But he barely had time to play with Dart last season before he got hurt.

Once their chemistry develops, they could be hard to stop. And it will help that after losing 5-foot-8 receiver Wan'Dale Robinson in free agency, the team went big to replace him. Harbaugh brought 6-foot-4, 241-pound tight end Isaiah Likely with him, and the Giants drafted 6-foot-4, 222-pound receiver Malachi Fields, giving size to the offense that the team hasn't had in years.

What Harbaugh really wants, though, is to build the kind of power-running offense he had in Baltimore. The Giants had the fifth-best rushing attack in the league last season behind a strong, improving offensive line. Tyrone Tracy Jr. is an underrated runner with some flash. But the real power should come from Cam Skattebo, if he can recover from the gruesome leg injury he suffered last year. If he can, that gives the Giants a three-pronged rushing attack that will get a literal push from another ex-Raven, 300-pound fullback Patrick Ricard. That will be the Giants' bread and butter. And if it works, Dart should have plenty of room to throw.

DEFENSE

If anything threatens to temper the Giants' feel-good vibes, it'll be their defense, which was mostly atrocious last season and even worse against the run. That

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**DALLAS**	**8:20**
SEPT. 21	AT L.A. RAMS	8:15
SEPT. 27	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	**ARIZONA**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	AT WASHINGTON	1:00
OCT. 18	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
OCT. 25	AT HOUSTON	1:00
NOV. 1	BYE	
NOV. 8	AT PHILADELPHIA	1:00
NOV. 12	**WASHINGTON**	**8:15**
NOV. 22	**JACKSONVILLE**	**1:00**
NOV. 29	AT INDIANAPOLIS	1:00
DEC. 6	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT SEATTLE	4:25
DEC. 20	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
DEC. 28	AT DETROIT	8:15
JAN. 3	AT DALLAS	1:00
TBD	**PHILADELPHIA**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	4
2022 NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2023	6
2024	3
2025	4

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **JOHN HARBAUGH**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **180-113**
Offensive Coordinator: **MATT NAGY**
Defensive Coordinator: **DENNARD WILSON**
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: **CHRIS HORTON**
Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: **BRIAN CALLAHAN**
Running Backs: **WILLIE TAGGART**
Wide Receivers: **CHAD HALL**
Tight Ends: **TIM KELLY**
Offensive Line: **MIKE BLOOMGREN**
Defensive Line: **DENNIS JOHNSON**
Inside Linebackers: **FRANK BUSH**
Run Game Coordinator/Outside Linebackers: **CHARLIE BULLEN**
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: **DONALD D'ALESIO**
Defensive Backs: **ADDISON LYNCH**

JAXSON DART
QUARTERBACK

MIKE DINOVO-IMAGN IMAGES

run defense could be a particular problem now that they've traded one of the best defensive tackles in football, Dexter Lawrence II.

But they think their defense can be outstanding in other areas — particularly the pass rush, where they have four legitimate edge rushers for teams to contend with. Brian Burns had 16.5 sacks last season; Kayvon Thibodeaux had 11.5 in 2023. And they'll be joined by Abdul Carter, the third overall pick in last year's draft, and rookie Arvell Reese, who some scouts think was the best edge rusher in this year's draft.

If new defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson can find creative ways to get three or even all four of them on the field at once, the Giants' pass rush could be hard to handle.

They're not particularly strong behind that, but they think they'll get better run support with veteran Tremaine Edmunds in the middle. He and Reese, who'll begin as an off-ball linebacker, could be a dynamic duo inside. But the secondary is a major question mark. Veteran corner Paulson Adebo and safety Jevon Holland have to rebound from down seasons. But they're really hoping rookie Colton Hood can emerge as a starting corner. If not, they'll put their faith in Greg Newsome II, a 2021 first-round pick who's trying to revive his career after four and a half mostly disappointing seasons in Cleveland.

There's talent on all levels, but it's the pass rush that needs to be great. If it is, the Giants could have a middle-of-the-pack defense, which they hope will be enough.

SPECIALISTS

As a former special teams coach, Harbaugh knows the importance of his specialists, which is why he made sure to bring All-Pro punter Jordan Stout with him from Baltimore. Stout has one of the strongest legs in the game and averaged a career-best 44.9 net yards last season. He's also an expert at pinning teams inside the 20, dropping 43% of his punts there in his career.

The Giants finally parted ways with veteran placekicker Graham Gano after three frustrating, injury-plagued seasons and replaced him with the younger, more durable Jason Sanders. The 30-year-old didn't miss a single game in his seven seasons in Miami, and he made 90.2% of his field goals last season. The only question with Sanders is how he can handle the wind and weather in his new home stadium, and the Northeast in general.

Meanwhile, the Giants are set at returner with the underrated Gunner Olszewski, a 6-foot, 190-pound wrecking ball who is fearless returning punts and dangerous when he has room on kickoff returns. He's a formidable "gunner" on coverage, too, making him one of the most valuable special-teamers in the league.

FINAL ANALYSIS

There's nowhere to go but up, and it's impossible to imagine a Harbaugh-coached team with a more experienced Dart at quarterback being worse than it was last season. The offense has more weapons, a stronger line and potentially an even more dominant running game. This team, which has been an offensive mess for most of the past decade, shouldn't have trouble moving the ball.

But the defense remains a big issue. Yes, the Giants should be able to rush the passer, but can they do anything else? Stopping the run will still be difficult, especially with Lawrence gone. Their secondary is mostly the same as it was last year. Defense is not going to be what powers this team, at least not right away.

They do have enough, though, to be much more competitive, and they will be a much better-coached team. That alone could be the difference in two or three more wins. That might not be enough to make the Giants a playoff team, but it should bring them close to the race. They have a chance to hang around until the end, even if they end up falling short.

2025 RESULTS (4-13)

Sept. 7	at Washington	L	6-21
Sept. 14	at Dallas (ot)	L	37-40
Sept. 21	Kansas City	L	9-22
Sept. 28	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**21-18**
Oct. 5	at New Orleans	L	14-26
Oct. 9	**PHILADELPHIA**	**W**	**34-17**
Oct. 19	at Denver	L	32-33
Oct. 26	at Philadelphia	L	20-38
Nov. 2	San Francisco	L	24-34
Nov. 9	at Chicago	L	20-24
Nov. 16	Green Bay	L	20-27
Nov. 23	at Detroit (ot)	L	27-34
Dec. 1	at New England	L	15-33
Dec. 14	Washington	L	21-29
Dec. 21	Minnesota	L	13-16
Dec. 28	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**34-10**
Jan. 4	**DALLAS**	**W**	**34-17**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	333.5	13	7
RUSHING	129.1	5	3
PASSING	204.4	21	12
SCORING	22.4	T17	T8
THIRD DOWN %	40.2	14	7
POINTS/PLAY	0.351	22	12

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	359.5	28	13
RUSHING	145.3	31	16
PASSING	214.2	16	8
SCORING	25.8	26	13
INTERCEPTIONS	9	T23	11
SACKS	39	T15	9
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.417	27	14
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-2	T15	T8

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JAXSON DART	339	216	2,272	15	5
RUSSELL WILSON	119	69	831	3	3
JAMEIS WINSTON	66	37	567	2	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
TYRONE TRACY JR.	176	740	4.2	2
JAXSON DART	86	487	5.7	9
DEVIN SINGLETARY	119	437	3.7	5
CAM SKATTEBO	101	410	4.1	5

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
WAN'DALE ROBINSON	92	1,014	11.0	4
THEO JOHNSON	45	528	11.7	5
DARIUS SLAYTON	37	538	14.5	1
TYRONE TRACY JR.	36	288	8.0	2

KICKING: Graham Gano, 9-10 FGs, 9-9 PATs, 36 points; Ben Sauls, 8-8 FGs, 7-7 PATs, 31 points; Younghoe Koo, 4-6 FGs, 11-12 PATs, 23 points; Jude McAtamney, 2-2 FGs, 9-12 PATs, 15 points; **TACKLES:** Bobby Okereke, 143; Dane Belton, 120; **SACKS:** Brian Burns, 16.5; Abdul Carter, 4.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Bobby Okereke, 2; Dru Phillips, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

WINNING PEDIGREE The Giants have hired only three head coaches in their history who have had prior NFL head-coaching experience, and John Harbaugh is by far the most accomplished. He comes with a Super Bowl ring and a .614 winning percentage in 18 years with the Ravens (180-113). The only other experienced coaches the Giants have hired were Tom Coughlin (68-60, .531 with the Jaguars) and Dan Reeves (110-73-1, .601 with the Broncos).

TOM HORAK-IMAGN IMAGES

DROUGHT BUSTER With the Giants planning to play **Arvell Reese** as an off-ball, inside linebacker, their long drought is finally over. He's the first linebacker drafted by the Giants in the first round since Carl Banks went No. 3 overall in 1984.

JEWEL THIEF Giants QB Jaxson Dart wears a sparkling necklace filled with diamond-encrusted hearts as part of his uniform on game day. And it has a special meaning for him — he stole it from his sister. He said he was home for a break before his Ole Miss team played in the Gator Bowl during his final college season and he "just saw it in her room, and I (thought), 'You know what? I kind of like it. So I put it on and it's kind of been good luck for me ever since." Don't worry, though — his sister didn't miss it. "We got her another one," Dart says.

ESCAPE ARTIST Running back Cam Skattebo left a big impression in the Giants' locker room as a rookie. He lived up to his "Nature Boy" nickname too, both for a toughness that mimicked pro wrestling legend Ric Flair, and for the fact that he screamed Flair's signature "Woooo!" after every hit, or before every practice, or … basically all the time. But his family called him "Houdini" from a young age because he had a knack for escaping car seats, even when he was still in diapers.

SCOUTING THE GIANTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK

"The John Harbaugh era, starting now, is expected to inject toughness and professionalism into the Giants' culture. He's the boss, and general manager Joe Schoen defers to Harbaugh, who reports directly to ownership. … Health is a big deal for this offense, which has the potential to be potent. Quarterback Jaxson Dart has to be more aware and less headstrong about taking big hits. ... Running back Cam Skattebo is an inspirational, head-knocking downhill runner. He can dish it out as well as absorb tackles and keep his feet churning. … Wide receiver Malik Nabers is a constant big-play threat. … Darnell Mooney should help Dart out as a receiver with true speed. … Backup QB is in good hands with Jameis Winston. … The selection of Francis Mauigoa gives the Giants the best overall offensive lineman in the draft. He could start at right guard. … It was important to retain Jermaine Eluemunor on a new deal. … Andrew Thomas quietly is one of the better left tackles in the league. … Brian Burns' pass-rushing skills are practically unparalleled. … Signing heavyweight nose tackle D.J. Reader and veteran Shelby Harris helps make up for the trade of Dexter Lawrence II after a contract dispute. … Building in the trenches was the theme for the Giants' draft class. Edge rusher Arvell Reese has size, strength and growth in front of him as a pass-rusher working in his favor. … The Giants need Abdul Carter to keep getting better. … Signing Tremaine Edmunds gives the Giants an imposing inside linebacker who can run. … The secondary is in the solid category."

2026 GIANTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12	Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	9	Arkansas	FA-Ten-26	D6-Jac-16
6	Dart, Jaxson	QB	6-2	223	1	Ole Miss	D1b-25	D1b-NYG-25
19	Winston, Jameis	QB	6-4	231	11	Florida State	FA-Cle-25	D1-TB-15

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20	Gray, Eric	RB	5-10	211	3	Oklahoma	D5-23	D5-NYG-23
25	Miller, Dante	RB	5-9	200	1	South Carolina	FA-24	FA-NYG-24
45	Ricard, Patrick	FB	6-3	300	9	Maine	FA-Bal-26	FA-Bal-17
26	Singletary, Devin	RB	5-7	203	7	Florida Atlantic	FA-Hou-24	D3a-Buf-19
44	Skattebo, Cam	RB	5-11	215	1	Arizona State	D4-25	D4-NYG-25
29	Tracy Jr., Tyrone	RB	5-11	210	2	Purdue	D5-24	D5-NYG-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82	Austin III, Calvin	WR	5-9	162	3	Memphis	FA-Pit-26	D4-Pit-22
83	Cambre, Dalen	WR	6-0	192	1	Louisiana	FA-25	FA-NYG-25
81	Collins, Beaux	WR	6-3	206	1	Notre Dame	FA-25	FA-NYG-25
48	Conner, Tanner	TE	6-3	237	3	Idaho State	FA-25	FA-Mia-22
86	Fidone II, Thomas	TE	6-6	255	1	Nebraska	D7a-25	D7a-NYG-25
88	Gipson, Xavier	WR	5-9	189	3	Stephen F. Austin	W-NYJ-25	FA-NYJ-23
89	Hodgins, Isaiah	WR	6-3	200	4	Oregon State	FA-Buf-25	D6b-Buf-20
13	Hyatt, Jalin	WR	6-0	185	3	Tennessee	D3-23	D3-NYG-23
84	Johnson, Theo	TE	6-6	264	2	Penn State	D4-24	D4-NYG-24
9	Likely, Isaiah	TE	6-4	241	4	Coastal Carolina	FA-Bal-26	D4e-Bal-22
85	Manhertz, Chris	TE	6-6	235	10	Canisius	FA-Den-24	FA-Buf-14
5	Miller, Ryan	WR	6-2	221	3	Furman	W-TB-25	FA-TB-23
17	Mooney, Darnell	WR	5-11	180	6	Tulane	FA-Atl-26	D5c-Chi-20
1	Nabers, Malik	WR	6-0	200	2	LSU	D1-24	D1-NYG-24
80	Olszewski, Gunner	WR	6-0	190	7	Bemidji State	FA-25	FA-NE-19
18	Slayton, Darius	WR	6-1	198	7	Auburn	D5-19	D5-NYG-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72	Eluemunor, Jermaine	OL	6-4	338	9	Texas A&M	FA-LV-24	D5-Bal-17
75	Ezeudu, Joshua	OL	6-4	310	4	North Carolina	D3a-22	D3a-NYG-22
77	Faalele, Daniel	G	6-8	370	4	Minnesota	FA-Bal-26	D4a-Bal-22
67	Holskey, Reid	OL	6-6	310	1	Miami (Ohio)	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
60	Hudson, Bryan	C	6-5	305	1	Louisville	FA-24	FA-Det-24
63	Kubas, Jake	G	6-4	308	2	North Dakota State	FA-24	FA-NYG-24
71	Mbow, Marcus	OL	6-5	300	1	Purdue	D5-25	D5-NYG-25
73	Neal, Evan	OL	6-7	340	4	Alabama	D1b-22	D1b-NYG-22
62	Patrick, Lucas	C	6-3	313	9	Duke	FA-Cin-26	FA-GB-16
76	Runyan, Jon	G	6-4	307	6	Michigan	FA-GB-24	D6a-GB-20
61	Schmitz Jr., John M.	C	6-4	320	3	Minnesota	D2-23	D2-NYG-23
64	Stinnie, Aaron	OL	6-3	312	8	James Madison	FA-TB-24	FA-Ten-18
78	Thomas, Andrew	T	6-5	315	6	Georgia	D1-20	D1-NYG-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
91	Alexander, Darius	DL	6-4	310	1	Toledo	D3-25	D3-NYG-25
98	Fotu, Leki	DT	6-5	317	6	Utah	FA-26	D4-Ari-20
93	Harris, Shelby	DT	6-2	288	12	Illinois State	FA-Cle-26	D7-LV-14
	Pickens, Zacch	DT	6-4	303	3	South Carolina	W-KC-26	D3-Chi-23
	Reader, DJ	DL	6-3	330	10	Clemson	FA-Det-26	D5b-Hou-16
99	Roberts, Sam	DL	6-5	300	3	NW Missouri State	FA-Atl-26	D6-NE-22
95	Robertson-Harris, Roy	DT	6-7	300	9	UTEP	FA-Sea-25	FA-Chi-16

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46	Barnes, Zaire	LB	6-1	227	2	Western Michigan	FA-25	D6-NYJ-23
0	Burns, Brian	OLB	6-5	250	7	Florida State	T-Car-24	D1-Car-19
3	Carter, Abdul	OLB	6-3	252	1	Penn State	D1a-25	D1a-NYG-25
49	Edmunds, Tremaine	LB	6-4	251	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Chi-26	D1b-Buf-18
48	Ford, Trace	OLB	6-2	252	1	Oklahoma	FA-25	FA-NYG-25
45	Fox, Tomon	OLB	6-2	245	3	North Carolina	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
57	Golston, Chauncey	OLB	6-5	277	5	Iowa	FA-Dal-25	D3b-Dal-21
47	Jones, Cam	LB	6-2	227	3	Indiana	FA-NYJ-26	FA-KC-23
41	McFadden, Micah	ILB	6-2	232	4	Indiana	D5a-22	D5a-NYG-22
53	Muasau, Darius	ILB	6-0	234	2	UCLA	D6-24	D6-NYG-24
33	Murphy, Caleb	OLB	6-3	254	3	Ferris State	W-NE-25	FA-Ten-23
5	Thibodeaux, Kayvon	OLB	6-5	258	4	Oregon	D1a-22	D1a-NYG-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21	Adebo, Paulson	CB	6-1	192	5	Stanford	FA-NO-25	D3-NO-21
2	Banks, Deonte	CB	6-2	200	3	Maryland	D1-23	D1-NYG-23
35	Bernard-Converse, J.	CB	6-1	205	3	LSU	W-Cle-25	D6-NYJ-23
38	Black, Korie	CB	6-0	190	1	Oklahoma State	D7b-25	D7b-NYG-25
34	Brade, Beau	S	6-0	209	2	Maryland	W-Bal-25	FA-Bal-24
28	Campbell, Elijah	S	5-11	200	5	Northern Iowa	FA-Mia-26	FA-Cle-18
23	Green, Art	CB	6-2	200	2	Houston	FA-24	FA-Den-23
8	Holland, Jevón	S	6-1	207	5	Oregon	FA-Mia-25	D2a-Mia-21
31	Jones, Nic	CB	6-0	189	2	Ball State	FA-25	D7-KC-23
43	Layne, Raheem	S	5-11	192	3	Indiana	FA-24	FA-LAC-22
20	Newsome II, Greg	CB	6-0	192	5	Northwestern	FA-Jac-26	D1-Cle-21
27	Nubin, Tyler	S	6-2	210	2	Minnesota	D2-24	D2-NYG-24
36	Payton, Rico	CB	6-0	182	2	Pittsburg State	W-NO-25	FA-NO-24
22	Phillips, Dru	CB	5-11	180	2	Kentucky	D3-24	D3-NYG-24
25	Pinnock, Jason	S	6-0	200	5	Pitt	FA-SF-26	D5c-NYJ-21
24	Washington, Ar'Darius	S	5-8	180	4	TCU	FA-Bal-26	FA-Bal-21

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Sanders, Jason	K	5-11	195	8	New Mexico	FA-Mia-26	D7b-Mia-18
30	Sauls, Ben	K	5-10	185	1	Pitt	FA-25	FA-Pit-25
15	Stout, Jordan	P	6-3	209	4	Penn State	FA-Bal-26	D4d-Bal-22
55	Triner, Zach	LS	6-3	245	6	Assumption	FA-26	FA-NYJ-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Malik Nabers	18	Darius Slayton
WR	17	Darnell Mooney	0	Malachi Fields (R)
LT	78	Andrew Thomas	75	Joshua Ezeudu
LG	76	Jon Runyan	64	Aaron Stinnie
C	61	John Michael-Schmitz Jr.	62	Lucas Patrick
RG	77	Daniel Faalele	65	Francis Mauigoa (R)
RT	72	Jermaine Eluemunor	71	Marcus Mbow
TE	9	Isaiah Likely	84	Theo Johnson
QB	6	Jaxson Dart	19	Jameis Winston
RB	29	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	44	Cam Skattebo
FB	45	Patrick Ricard		

DEFENSE

DE	95	Roy Robertson-Harris	99	Sam Roberts
NT		DJ Reader	98	Leki Fotu
DT	93	Shelby Harris	91	Darius Alexander
OLB	0	Brian Burns	57	Chauncey Golston
ILB	52	Arvell Reese (R)	41	Micah McFadden
ILB	49	Tremaine Edmunds	53	Darius Muasau
OLB	3	Abdul Carter	5	Kayvon Thibodeaux
CB	21	Paulson Adebo	20	Greg Newsome II
CB	12	Colton Hood (R)	22	Dru Phillips
S	27	Tyler Nubin	25	Jason Pinnock
S	8	Jevon Holland	28	Elijah Campbell

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Jason Sanders	KR	80	Gunner Olszewski
P	15	Jordan Stout	PR	80	Gunner Olszewski

48

Per Next Gen Stats, Abdul Carter led the NFL in quick (under three seconds) quarterback pressures in 2025, ahead of second-place Nik Bonitto by five.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Arvell Reese	LB	6-4	243	Ohio State
1	Francis Mauigoa	OL	6-6	329	Miami (Fla.)
2	Colton Hood	CB	6-0	195	Tennessee
3	Malachi Fields	WR	6-4	222	Notre Dame
6	Bobby Jamison-Travis	DT	6-3	328	Auburn
6	J.C. Davis	OT	6-4	322	Illinois
6	Jack Kelly	LB	6-1	240	BYU

The Giants got three starters with their first three picks, including two of the top five players on their board. Add in a much-needed big receiver, and they landed four impact players. Arvell Reese gives them a fourth dangerous edge rusher, even though he'll start in the middle. Malachi Fields will really clear space for No. 1 wide receiver Malik Nabers and give quarterback Jaxson Dart the kind of big target he hasn't had. Francis Mauigoa is in the picture at right guard, and Colton Hood fills a huge hole on the corner. The Giants were already an improving team, but adding four players in the first three rounds who can help right away might be enough to make them a contender.

PHI

EAGLES

NFC EAST
FORECAST
1

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**WASHINGTON**	**4:25**
SEPT. 20	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
SEPT. 28	AT CHICAGO	8:15
OCT. 4	**L.A. RAMS**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	**JACKSONVILLE (LONDON)**	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 18	**CAROLINA**	**1:00**
OCT. 26	**DALLAS**	**8:15**
NOV. 1	AT WASHINGTON	8:20
NOV. 8	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	BYE	
NOV. 22	**PITTSBURGH**	**4:25**
NOV. 26	AT DALLAS	4:30
DEC. 6	AT ARIZONA	4:05
DEC. 13	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
DEC. 19	**SEATTLE**	**5:00**
DEC. 24	**HOUSTON**	**8:15**
JAN. 3	AT SAN FRANCISCO	8:20
TBD	AT N.Y. GIANTS	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021		9
2022	NFC PLAYOFFS	14
2023	NFC PLAYOFFS	11
2024	SUPER BOWL CHAMPION	14
2025	NFC PLAYOFFS	11

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **NICK SIRIANNI**
Record With Team: **59-26**
Career Record: **59-26**
Offensive Coordinator: **SEAN MANNION**
Defensive Coordinator: **VIC FANGIO**
Special Teams Coordinator: **MICHAEL CLAY**
Quarterbacks: **PARKS FRAZIER**
Running Backs/Assistant Head Coach: **JEMAL SINGLETON**
Wide Receivers: **AARON MOOREHEAD**
Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends: **RYAN MAHAFFEY**
Offensive Line: **CHRIS KUPER**
Offensive Passing Game Coordinator: **JOSH GRIZZARD**
Defensive Line/Senior Defensive Assistant/Associate Head Coach: **CLINT HURTT**
Defensive Ends/Outside Linebackers: **JEREMIAH WASHBURN**
Inside Linebackers: **BOBBY KING**
Cornerbacks: **ROY ANDERSON**
Secondary: **MIKE PELLEGRINO**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator: **JOE KASPER**

The difference in vibe from the summer that preceded the 2025 season and the one that comes in advance of the '26 campaign can't be any more pronounced for the Eagles. Gone is talk of a Super Bowl title repeat, replaced by an avalanche of questions following a 3-4 end to the regular season and a desultory 23-19 wild-card playoff loss to the outmanned San Francisco 49ers.

Eagles fans wonder whether new offensive coordinator Sean Mannion can revive an attack that sagged to 24th in the NFL in total offense. Offseason questions about quarterback Jalen Hurts surfaced, and the continuing saga of wide receiver A.J. Brown was a huge distraction as well.

The last time the team went through a late-season slide — in 2023 — it rebounded to win the Super Bowl the next season. It's harder to imagine that this time. Will the offensive line be healthy and overpowering again? Is the defensive backfield solid enough to shut down enemy passing attacks? And is there enough depth throughout the roster?

OFFENSE

It's hard to say that Hurts had a bad year in 2025, given his 3,224 passing yards, 25 TDs and six interceptions, but he did post his lowest QBR (55.2) since 2021, and his 421 rushing yards were his fewest since his rookie season. There were also reports he did not mesh with former offensive coordinator Kevin Patullo, and the Birds' less-effective ground game also hampered his performance.

But Hurts is a winner and a strong leader. He will make some big plays, but the Eagles need him to run more, throw the ball into the middle of the field and acclimate quickly to Mannion's offense. The Eagles signed veteran Andy Dalton to compete with Tanner McKee for the backup spot.

It will help if running back Saquon Barkley can approach the form that he exhibited in 2024, when he led the league with 2,005 rushing yards. His total dropped to 1,140 last year, and his yards per carry dropped from 5.8 to 4.1. He's still one of the best in the NFL, and if the Birds' line is healthy, he should threaten 1,500 yards. Tank Bigsby is a strong backup who averaged 5.9 yards per carry last year.

Tackles Jordan Mailata and Lane Johnson are both elite, although Johnson missed much of last year due to a Lisfranc injury. He's 36 and not a sure bet to play 17 games. Backup Fred Johnson is serviceable but a significant drop-off. Mammoth third-round pick Markel Bell didn't allow a sack last season at Miami (Fla.) and is a strong addition to the tackle rotation. Guard Landon Dickerson had injury issues last year. If healthy, he's a standout. Center Cam Jurgens is a good one, while right guard Tyler Steen struggled often last season but is young. He could find himself in a tough battle with sixth-round pick Micah Morris, a super-sized interior force from Georgia.

Trading up to draft Makai Lemon in the first round makes sense given Brown's imminent departure. Lemon is a versatile receiver with good speed. DeVonta Smith is now WR1. Smith is talented and can get open down the field, although he needs to improve on last year's four touchdowns. The Birds imported some depth by signing Hollywood Brown, who caught 49 passes last year, and Dontayvion Wicks, a possession receiver who runs good routes. Tight end Dallas Goedert is back after scoring 11 times last year and catching a career-high 60 balls. Grant Calcaterra is serviceable, but rookie Eli Stowers, a second-round pick from Vanderbilt, has excellent pass-catching ability.

SAQUON BARKLEY
RUNNING BACK

BILL STREICHER-IMAGN IMAGES

DEFENSE

It's hard to blame the Eagles' defense for last year's problems. The team gave up the fifth-fewest points (19.1 per game) in the NFL in '25 and returns several of its key performers from last season, most notably third-year cornerbacks Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean, both of whom earned first-team All-Pro honors last year.

Mitchell mans the left side but can travel with other teams' top receivers, while DeJean is an impressive slot corner. The rest of the secondary is not as certain. Safety Andrew Mukuba had a solid debut — until he broke his ankle. He has the potential. The strong safety is Marcus Epps, who started four games last season and will be asked to make a big jump. Expect Riq Woolen, whom the Eagles signed as a free agent, to be the other starting corner. He has tremendous skill and athletic ability, but he made some key late-game mistakes last year and must improve his consistency. Kelee Ringo is a serviceable backup corner. Seventh-round pick Cole Wisniewski is strong against the run at safety and can cover tight ends.

The Eagles locked up one of their D-line mainstays when they signed Jordan Davis to a three-year, $78 million contract that made him the highest-paid nose tackle in NFL history. He teams with Jalen Carter in one of the league's top interior tandems. Davis had 72 tackles and 4.5 sacks last year.

Jalyx Hunt had a big year on the outside last season, piling up 6.5 sacks and picking off three passes. Tackle Moro Ojomo posted six sacks, while free-agent signee Arnold Ebiketie had two sacks for the Atlanta Falcons after posting six in '24. The Eagles traded for Jonathan Greenard, an edge rusher who had three sacks in 12 games last season with the Vikings, and signed him to a fat extension. He exerts plenty of pressure on the pocket.

Zack Baun leads the linebacking corps and topped the team with 123 tackles last season. He is reliable and productive. Second-year man Jihaad Campbell had 80 stops last year and is expected to blossom in the middle in 2026. Jeremiah Trotter Jr. and Smael Mondon Jr. are solid young backups.

SPECIALISTS

Punter Braden Mann had an exceptional season last year and was fifth in the NFL with a 49.9-yard average. The kicking situation isn't as settled. Jake Elliott made 20-of-27 field-goal tries last season and was just 4-of-8 from beyond 50 yards. He also missed three of his chances from 40-49 yards.

Britain Covey is a reliable punt returner who can break off some big gainers, and Will Shipley averaged 26.8 yards on kickoff returns, with a long of 41.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The team enters 2026 with some significant questions on offense, most notably whether Hurts is capable of working with Mannion to make the passing attack more productive, something that will become more difficult in Brown's absence.

The offensive line works well in theory, provided Johnson and Dickerson are healthy and Steen can be steady at guard. If that doesn't happen, Barkley will not be the force he could be in the ground game, and the attack will falter again. Barring injury, the attack should be more potent, but matching the 2024 levels will be difficult.

There is experience and talent on defense, although the team needs more production in its pass rush and at safety, where neither Makuba nor Epps is a proven starter. Adding Greenard will help, but the team lacks quality depth, particularly on the O-line and in the secondary. The Eagles are a playoff team, but a deep run will be tough to accomplish.

2025 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept. 4	**Dallas**	**W**	**24-20**
Sept. 14	**at Kansas City**	**W**	**20-17**
Sept. 21	**L.A. Rams**	**W**	**33-26**
Sept. 28	**at Tampa Bay**	**W**	**31-25**
Oct. 5	Denver	L	17-21
Oct. 9	at N.Y. Giants	L	17-34
Oct. 19	**at Minnesota**	**W**	**28-22**
Oct. 26	**N.Y. Giants**	**W**	**38-20**
Nov. 10	**at Green Bay**	**W**	**10-7**
Nov. 16	**Detroit**	**W**	**16-9**
Nov. 23	at Dallas	L	21-24
Nov. 28	Chicago	L	15-24
Dec. 8	at L.A. Chargers (ot)	L	19-22
Dec. 14	**Las Vegas**	**W**	**31-0**
Dec. 20	**at Washington**	**W**	**29-18**
Dec. 28	**at Buffalo**	**W**	**13-12**
Jan. 4	Washington	L	17-24
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	San Francisco	L	19-23

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	311.2	24	14
RUSHING	116.9	18	10
PASSING	194.3	23	13
SCORING	22.3	19	10
THIRD DOWN %	37.1	24	13
POINTS/PLAY	0.368	15	8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	314.2	13	5
RUSHING	124.4	22	10
PASSING	189.9	8	3
SCORING	19.1	5	2
INTERCEPTIONS	12	15	8
SACKS	42	T12	T7
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.306	5	2
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+6	7	4

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JALEN HURTS	454	294	3,224	25	6
TANNER McKEE	43	24	274	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
SAQUON BARKLEY	280	1,140	4.1	7
JALEN HURTS	105	421	4.0	8
TANK BIGSBY	58	344	5.9	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
A.J. BROWN	78	1,003	12.9	7
DEVONTA SMITH	77	1,008	13.1	4
DALLAS GOEDERT	60	591	9.9	11
SAQUON BARKLEY	37	273	7.4	2

KICKING: Jake Elliott, 20-27 FGs, 41-42 PATs, 101 points
TACKLES: Zack Baun, 123; Cooper DeJean, 93
SACKS: Jalyx Hunt, 6.5; Moro Ojomo, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jalyx Hunt, 3; 3 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ASK AGAIN LATER As rumors swirled during the offseason about whether the Eagles would trade wide receiver A.J. Brown, reporters continued to ask team representatives whether it would happen. One funny exchange came in April, when someone asked GM Howie Roseman about Brown. "What do you think the odds are that I'm answering this question any different than I've answered anywhere else? Like really, do you think that's 50%? Do you think that's 75%?" Roseman said. "A.J. Brown is an Eagle." Until he wasn't.

VINCENT CARCHIETTA-IMAGN IMAGES

DOME TEAM? Now that the Sixers and Flyers have agreed to build a new arena in south Philadelphia, the Philadelphia region's attention has turned to the Eagles, who remain under lease at Lincoln Financial Field through 2032. But in April, owner **Jeffrey Lurie** admitted the team was in the exploratory stages of building a new stadium. If the Eagles embark on the project, it will likely be a domed stadium that will enable the team and city to host a Super Bowl, as well as Final Fours and other big events. An announcement is not pending, but don't be surprised if the team abandons the 22-plus-year-old Linc.

NEXT MANNION UP In late January, the Eagles hired Sean Mannion as offensive coordinator, the seventh person to hold that job since 2016. Mannion holds the record for career passing yards in the Pac-12 and threw for 13,600 during his four years at Oregon State. He spent seven seasons with the Los Angeles Rams and Minnesota Vikings and was an assistant on the Green Bay Packers staff for two seasons before joining the Eagles. He has not called a play in an NFL game.

BIG LOSS Mannion's arrival is big, but Jeff Stoutland's departure could be even bigger. The long-time offensive line coach, who had been with the franchise since 2013 and who coordinated the running game for eight seasons, left the coaching staff in early February. He played a huge role in the development of one of the league's best offensive line for several seasons, and several former players spoke with reverence about having "graduated" from Stoutland University.

SCOUTING THE EAGLES

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PHILADELPHIA

"Jalen Hurts is on notice: Do it their way. The Eagles have sent several unsubtle messages to Hurts through the media. They want him to play within their system and not freelance. He has taken the high road so far. … DeVonta Smith is undersized but tough and savvy as a receiver. … Will A.J. Brown be traded? Will he join Mike Vrabel in New England? As of press time, he remained with the Eagles, even as a trade is still anticipated. … If Brown is out, the Eagles will lean on Makai Lemon, a rookie, along with Dontayvion Wicks and Hollywood Brown. … This is still a massive, great offensive line, headlined by Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata and left guard Landon Dickerson. … It made sense to work it out with tight end Dallas Goedert contractually. … Saquon Barkley is a true impact runner. They need a huge year from him. … The addition of Jonathan Greenard should give the Eagles' pass rush a versatile plus player. … No NFL team has something akin to the Eagles' defensive tackle tandem of Jalen Carter and Jordan Davis. … Zack Baun took a step back after a breakout year two seasons ago in Philadelphia. … Jalyx Hunt is a former small-school standout who has been able to adapt to the pro game. … The Eagles will miss Reed Blankenship's leadership and tackling. … There aren't a lot of corners out there who can run and cover like Quinyon Mitchell. ... Cooper DeJean is on the short list of great nickels. … Andrew Mukuba has size and speed for days."

2026 EAGLES VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Dalton, Andy	QB	6-2	220	15	TCU	T-Car-26	D2-Cin-11
1	Hurts, Jalen	QB	6-1	223	6	Oklahoma	D2-20	D2-Phi-20
16	McKee, Tanner	QB	6-6	231	3	Stanford	D6-23	D6-Phi-23

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26	Barkley, Saquon	RB	6-0	232	8	Penn State	FA-NYG-24	D1-NYG-18
8	Bigsby, Tank	RB	5-11	215	3	Auburn	T-Jac-25	D3-Jac-23
39	Pierce, Dameon	RB	5-10	215	4	Florida	FA-KC-26	D4-Hou-22
28	Shipley, Will	RB	5-11	209	2	Clemson	D4-24	D4-Phi-24
34	Steele, Carson	RB	6-0	228	2	UCLA	FA-26	FA-KC-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11	Brown, A.J.	WR	6-1	226	7	Ole Miss	T-Ten-22	D2-Ten-19
0	Brown, Hollywood	WR	5-9	180	7	Oklahoma	FA-KC-26	D1-Bal-19
81	Calcaterra, Grant	TE	6-4	240	4	SMU	D6b-22	D6b-Phi-22
80	Cooper, Darius	WR	5-11	210	1	Tarleton State	FA-25	FA-Phi-25
18	Covey, Britain	WR	5-8	173	4	Utah	FA-25	FA-Phi-22
88	Goedert, Dallas	TE	6-5	256	8	South Dakota State	D2-18	D2-Phi-18
82	Gray, Danny	WR	6-0	200	3	SMU	FA-24	D3-SF-22
84	Jenkins, E.J.	TE	6-6	245	2	Georgia Tech	FA-24	FA-NYJ-23
36	Latu, Cameron	TE	6-5	244	2	Alabama	FA-25	D3c-SF-23
19	Moore, Elijah	WR	5-9	184	5	Ole Miss	FA-26	D2-NYJ-21
83	Mundt, Johnny	TE	6-4	243	8	Oregon	FA-Jac-26	FA-LAR-17
47	Smartt, Stone	TE	6-4	226	4	Old Dominion	FA-NYJ-26	FA-LAC-22
6	Smith, DeVonta	WR	6-0	170	5	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Phi-21
86	Watkins, Quez	WR	6-0	193	5	Southern Miss	FA-25	D6b-Phi-20
13	Wicks, Dontayvion	WR	6-1	206	3	Virginia	T-GB-26	D5b-GB-23
89	Wilson, Johnny	WR	6-6	228	2	Florida State	D6a-24	D6a-Phi-24

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
69	Dickerson, Landon	G	6-6	332	5	Alabama	D2-21	D2-Phi-21
78	Hinton, Myles	T	6-7	323	1	Michigan	D6b-25	D6b-Phi-25
74	Johnson, Fred	T	6-7	326	7	Florida	T-Jac-25	FA-Pit-19
65	Johnson, Lane	T	6-6	325	13	Oklahoma	D1-13	D1-Phi-13
51	Jurgens, Cam	C	6-3	303	4	Nebraska	D2-22	D2-Phi-22
66	Kendall, Drew	C/G	6-4	308	1	Boston College	D5c-25	D5c-Phi-25
61	Lampkin, Willie	G/C	5-11	290	1	North Carolina	W-LAR-25	FA-LAR-25
68	Mailata, Jordan	T	6-8	365	8	None	D7-18	D7-Phi-18
75	Majors, Jake	C/G	6-3	315	1	Texas	FA-25	FA-TB-25
67	Ojukwu, John	OL	6-5	309	2	Boise State	FA-26	FA-Ten-23
63	Pierce, Hollin	T	6-8	341	1	Rutgers	FA-25	FA-Phi-25
56	Steen, Tyler	G/T	6-6	321	3	Alabama	D3a-23	D3a-Phi-23
73	Williams, Cameron	T	6-6	317	1	Texas	D6c-25	D6c-Phi-25

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
98	Carter, Jalen	DT	6-3	314	3	Georgia	D1a-23	D1a-Phi-23
90	Davis, Jordan	DT	6-6	336	4	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Phi-22
77	Graham, Ta'Quon	DT	6-4	300	5	Texas	FA-25	D5-Atl-21
96	Hall, Gabe	DT	6-6	295	1	Baylor	FA-24	FA-Phi-24
97	Ojomo, Moro	DT	6-3	292	3	Texas	D7-23	D7-Phi-23
95	Robinson, Ty	DT	6-5	288	1	Nebraska	D4-25	D4-Phi-25
94	Young, Byron	DT	6-3	292	3	Alabama	W-LV-24	D3-LV-23

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
53	Baun, Zack	LB	6-3	225	6	Wisconsin	FA-NO-24	D3a-NO-20
59	Campbell, Chance	LB	6-2	232	4	Ole Miss	FA-Ten-25	D6b-Ten-22
30	Campbell, Jihaad	LB	6-3	235	1	Alabama	D1-25	D1-Phi-25
17	Ebiketie, Arnold	OLB	6-2	250	4	Penn State	FA-Atl-26	D2a-Atl-22
52	Greenard, Jonathan	OLB	6-3	259	6	Florida	T-Min-26	D3-Hou-20
58	Hunt, Jalyx	OLB	6-3	252	2	Houston Christian	D3-24	D3-Phi-24
45	Martin, Chandler	LB	6-0	229	1	Memphis	FA-26	FA-Bal-25
42	Mondon Jr., Smael	LB	6-2	224	1	Georgia	D5b-25	D5b-Phi-25
43	Ramirez, Jose	OLB	6-2	252	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-26	D6c-TB-23
3	Smith Jr., Nolan	OLB	6-2	238	3	Georgia	D1b-23	D1b-Phi-23
54	Trotter Jr., Jeremiah	LB	6-0	225	2	Clemson	D5b-24	D5b-Phi-24
57	Tryon-Shoyinka, Joe	OLB	6-5	259	5	Washington	FA-Chi-26	D1-TB-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Bennett, Jakorian	CB	5-10	200	3	Maryland	T-LV-25	D4a-LV-23
35	Carter II, Michael	CB	5-10	184	5	Duke	T-NYJ-25	D5b-NYJ-21
41	Castro-Fields, Tariq	CB	6-1	197	3	Penn State	FA-24	D6-SF-22
33	DeJean, Cooper	DB	6-0	198	2	Iowa	D2-24	D2-Phi-24
29	Epps, Marcus	S	6-0	191	7	Wyoming	FA-25	D6-Min-19
48	Gray, J.T.	S	6-0	202	8	Mississippi State	FA-TB-26	FA-NO-18
49	Johnson, Brandon	CB	5-10	185	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Phi-25
32	Jones, Jonathan	CB	5-9	185	10	Auburn	FA-NE-25	FA-NE-16
22	McWilliams, Mac	CB	5-10	191	1	UCF	D5a-25	D5a-Phi-25
27	Mitchell, Quinyon	CB	6-0	193	2	Toledo	D1-24	D1-Phi-24
24	Mukuba, Andrew	S	5-11	186	1	Texas	D2-25	D2-Phi-25
7	Ringo, Kelee	CB	6-2	207	3	Georgia	D4-23	D4-Phi-23
31	Sam, Andre '	S	5-10	194	1	LSU	FA-24	FA-Phi-24
38	Thomas, Ambry	CB	6-0	183	5	Michigan	FA-25	D3-SF-21
2	Woolen, Riq	CB	6-4	210	4	UTSA	FA-Sea-26	D5a-Sea-22

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Elliott, Jake	K	5-9	167	9	Memphis	PS-Cin-17	D5-Cin-17
10	Mann, Braden	P	5-11	198	6	Texas A&M	FA-23	D6-NYJ-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	6	DeVonta Smith	13	Dontayvion Wicks
WR	9	Makai Lemon (R)	89	Johnny Wilson
WR	0	Hollywood Brown	80	Darius Cooper
LT	68	Jordan Mailata	72	Markel Bell (R)
LG	69	Landon Dickerson	61	Willie Lampkin
C	51	Cam Jurgens	66	Drew Kendall
RG	56	Tyler Steen	79	Micah Morris (R)
LT	65	Lane Johnson	74	Fred Johnson
TE	88	Dallas Goedert	87	Eli Stowers (R)
QB	1	Jalen Hurts	14	Andy Dalton
RB	26	Saquon Barkley	8	Tank Bigsby

DEFENSE

DE	97	Moro Ojomo	96	Gabe Hall
NT	90	Jordan Davis	95	Ty Robinson
DT	98	Jalen Carter	94	Byron Young
OLB	52	Jonathan Greenard	3	Nolan Smith Jr.
ILB	53	Zack Baun	42	Smael Mondon
ILB	30	Jihaad Campbell	54	Jeremiah Trotter Jr.
OLB	58	Jalyx Hunt	17	Arnold Ebiketie
CB	27	Quinyon Mitchell	23	Jakorian Bennett
CB	2	Riq Woolen	7	Kelee Ringo
NB	33	Cooper DeJean	32	Jonathan Jones
S	29	Marcus Epps	35	Michael Carter II
S	24	Andrew Mukuba	31	Andre' Sam

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jake Elliott	KR	28	Will Shipley
P	10	Braden Mann	PR	18	Britain Covey

13.2%

A league-high 13.2% of Jalen Hurts' passes went 20 or more air yards in 2025.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Makai Lemon	WR	5-11	192	USC
2	Eli Stowers	TE	6-3	239	Vanderbilt
3	Markel Bell	OT	6-9	346	Miami (Fla.)
5	Cole Payton	QB	6-3	232	North Dakota State
6	Micah Morris	OG	6-5	334	Georgia
7	Cole Wisniewski	S	6-3	219	Texas Tech
7	Uar Bernard	DT	6-4	306	Nigeria (Int'l Pathway Program)
7	Keyshawn James-Newby	OLB	6-1	240	New Mexico

There can be no doubt that the Eagles drafted for need. Expect Makai Lemon to start immediately. He has the talent to be a weapon capable of putting pressure on defenses all over the field. Eli Stowers will see plenty of time at tight end. However, he must improve his blocking. If Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata are healthy, Markel Bell is a luxury, but he could be a starter as early as next year. Cole Payton will vie for a backup role, while Micah Morris provides much-needed depth in the middle of the offensive line and could be a future starter. Cole Wisniewski is a potential rotation piece but should help on special teams, and Uar Bernard is an intriguing prospect with scads of athletic ability but little polish. Keyshawn James-Newby looks to be a special teams piece.

COMMANDERS

NFC EAST FORECAST
3

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT PHILADELPHIA	4:25
SEPT. 20	AT DALLAS	4:25
SEPT. 27	**SEATTLE**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	**INDIANAPOLIS (LONDON)**	**9:30 A.M.**
OCT. 11	N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
OCT. 19	AT SAN FRANCISCO	8:15
OCT. 25	BYE	
NOV. 1	**PHILADELPHIA**	**8:20**
NOV. 8	**L.A. RAMS**	**1:00**
NOV. 12	AT N.Y. GIANTS	8:15
NOV. 23	**CINCINNATI**	**8:15**
NOV. 29	AT ARIZONA	4:25
DEC. 6	AT TENNESSEE	1:00
DEC. 13	**HOUSTON**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	**ATLANTA**	**1:00**
TBD	AT MINNESOTA	
TBD	AT JACKSONVILLE	
TBD	**DALLAS**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	7
2022	8
2023	4
2024 NFC PLAYOFFS	12
2025	5

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **DAN QUINN**
Record With Team: **17-17**
Career Record: **60-59**
Offensive Coordinator: **DAVID BLOUGH**
Defensive Coordinator: **DARONTE JONES**
Special Teams Coordinator: **LARRY IZZO**
Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: **DAVID RAIH**
Quarterbacks: **D.J. WILLIAMS**
Running Backs: **ANTHONY LYNN**
Wide Receivers: **BOBBY ENGRAM**
Tight Ends: **BEN STEELE**
Offensive Line: **DARNELL STAPLETON**
Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: **ERIC HENDERSON**
Linebackers: **KEN NORTON JR.**
Outside Linebackers: **JOHN PAGANO**
Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks: **WILLIAM GAY**
Defensive Backs/Safeties: **TOMMY DONATELL**

By the end of the Commanders' 5-12 disaster in 2025 — which halted all the progress Jayden Daniels and Co. had made the year before during their run to the NFC Championship Game — it was clear this was a team in need of an overhaul. After fielding the oldest roster in the NFL last year, the Commanders' mission this offseason was clear: get younger, faster and deeper; shore up a defense that had become a liability by the end of 2025; and find Daniels some more help.

To that end, Washington changed both its offensive and defensive coordinators, used its surplus of cap space to sign a slew of 20-something free agents — including six potential defensive starters, led by veteran edge rusher Odafe Oweh — and engineered a draft class that was widely praised for its overall value. It isn't hyperbole to say that the upcoming season in Washington — Year 3 for both Daniels and head coach Dan Quinn — will be seismic in terms of influencing the franchise's future direction.

OFFENSE

Daniels staggered through a dismal 2025, suffering a series of injuries (right knee, right hamstring, left elbow) that limited him to seven starts. But the problems went far beyond Daniels' health; when he was on the field, he was plagued by the line's inability to protect him and the severe limitations of (and injuries to) his skill players, some of whom, especially by the end of the season, were plucked off the street. As a result, the Commanders headed into this offseason — which featured a change of coordinators, with David Blough replacing Kliff Kingsbury — in desperate need of some upgrades to Daniels' supporting cast.

But first, they spent some of their precious cap space in the name of stability, re-signing backup quarterback Marcus Mariota and extending left tackle Laremy Tunsil. Finding pieces to supplement two-time Pro Bowl wide receiver Terry McLaurin proved a more elusive target. The Commanders did spend some money to sign tight end Chig Okonkwo and running backs Rachaad White and Jerome Ford, but none of them moved the needle in any significant way. The signings of White and Ford, the return of 2025 seventh-rounder Jacory Croskey-Merritt and the selection of Penn State's Kaytron Allen in the sixth round of the draft leave the Commanders with a surplus of running backs. The hierarchy will get sorted out during training camp, but Croskey-Merritt, who gained 805 yards and scored eight touchdowns as a rookie, is the incumbent starter.

Antonio Williams, a third-round pick out of Clemson, was an intriguing addition to the wide receiver room — a tough-nosed athlete and superb route-runner who will have a chance to compete for a starting spot in training camp. Although he lined up primarily in the slot at Clemson, the Commanders already have Luke McCaffrey and Jaylin Lane as good options there, so they may also add Williams to the mix, along with Treylon Burks, Dyami Brown and Van Jefferson, to be the outside receiver opposite McLaurin. However, it is an open question whether the Commanders possess a second elite option.

There are similar questions about the offensive line: Tunsil, the left tackle, is an elite performer, ranking second in the league in pass-blocking per Pro Football Focus. But the much-needed upgrades around Tunsil never materialized. The Commanders brought back both starting guards, Chris Paul and Sam Cosmi, as well as second-year right tackle Josh Conerly Jr., and elevated backup center Nick Allegretti to starter following the departure of Tyler Biadasz. The team did spend a sixth-round pick on center Matt Gulbin out of Michigan State.

WASHINGTON
5

JAYDEN DANIELS
QUARTERBACK

PETER CASEY-IMAGN IMAGES

DEFENSE

When you finish last in the NFL in yards allowed per game (384.3), you're probably going to need to overhaul the entire unit — and that's exactly what the team did for new coordinator Daronte Jones, with significant upgrades at all three levels.

The signature move of the Commanders' offseason — signing edge rusher Oweh to a record four-year $96 million deal that includes $68 million in guaranteed money — got mixed reviews. On the one hand, it appeared (at least on paper) to be an overreach; Oweh, a sixth-year pro, has averaged fewer than seven sacks per season across his career and is not much of a run-stopper. On the other hand, the Commanders desperately needed an upgrade to their pass rush, and Oweh should at least provide that. Another potential upgrade arrived via the draft, with the team spending a fifth-round pick on edge rusher Joshua Josephs out of Tennessee, who could compete with free-agent signee K'Lavon Chaisson for the starting spot opposite Oweh. As for the tackles, the bulk of the snaps are expected to be divided among a trio of holdovers — Daron Payne, Jer'Zhan Newton and Javon Kinlaw — plus veteran Tim Settle, who returned to the fold via free agency.

Linebacker Sonny Styles, drafted seventh overall, should be a perfect fit in Jones' scheme, with its emphasis on speed and versatility. At 6-foot-5, 243 pounds and with an 81-inch wingspan, Styles is a true second-level playmaker who can do nearly anything. A former safety, he has the speed to cover tight ends or slot receivers, and he's also an elite tackler. Combined with his high-character makeup, Styles should be the face of the Commanders' defense for years to come. In 2026, he'll head up a unit that also includes veteran Frankie Luvu, free-agent signee Leo Chenal and youngsters Jordan Magee and Kain Medrano.

Things appear less settled in the secondary, where the Commanders used free agency to shore up the ranks, signing safety Nick Cross and corner Amik Robertson to two-year deals; the former could wind up starting at strong safety, while the latter is a good fit for nickelback. But the team is also placing a lot of faith in some holdovers who may or not deserve it, such as third-year corner Mike Sainristil, a feast-or-famine sort with a penchant both for making interceptions and giving up big plays, and second-year corner Trey Amos, whose promising rookie season was cut short by a broken leg 10 games in.

SPECIALISTS

The placekicker job in Washington has been a revolving door — with seven kickers seeing action the past two seasons — and there is likely to be competition there again during training camp after the team signed Iowa's Drew Stevens as an undrafted free agent. He will be up against holdover Jake Moody, who signed late in the 2025 season and performed well over his six games in Washington.

By contrast, the punter job is the picture of stability thanks to veteran Tress Way, a Pro Bowler in 2025 for the third time in his career who is back for Year 13 in the burgundy and gold. Last year, he led the NFL by having 52.8% of his punts downed inside the opponents' 20.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Commanders have given their fans a case of whiplash these past two seasons, going from 12-5 and an NFC Championship Game appearance in 2024 to a 5-12 trainwreck in 2025. This year's edition is likely to be somewhere in the middle. Keeping Daniels healthy is obviously among the biggest factors that will determine the team's fate, but so is the potency of a new-look defense. Should Daniels and Styles both thrive, even a middle-of-the-pack finish in 2026 would represent progress and leave the franchise positioned to take the next step.

2025 RESULTS (5-12)

Sept. 7	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**21-6**
Sept. 11	at Green Bay	L	18-27
Sept. 21	**LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**41-24**
Sept. 28	at Atlanta	L	27-34
Oct. 5	**AT L.A. CHARGERS**	**W**	**27-10**
Oct. 13	Chicago	L	24-25
Oct. 19	at Dallas	L	22-44
Oct. 27	at Kansas City	L	7-28
Nov. 2	Seattle	L	14-38
Nov 9	Detroit	L	22-44
Nov. 16	at Miami (ot)	L	13-16
Nov. 30	Denver (ot)	L	26-27
Dec. 7	at Minnesota	L	0-31
Dec. 14	**AT N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**29-21**
Dec. 20	Philadelphia	L	18-29
Dec. 25	Dallas	L	23-30
Jan. 4	**AT PHILADELPHIA**	**W**	**24-17**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	318.8	22	12
RUSHING	134.7	4	2
PASSING	184.1	24	14
SCORING	20.9	22	11
THIRD DOWN %	37.6	21	12
POINTS/PLAY	0.360	20	10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	384.3	32	16
RUSHING	141.8	30	15
PASSING	242.5	28	15
SCORING	26.5	27	14
INTERCEPTIONS	8	T25	T12
SACKS	42	T12	T7
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.415	26	13
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-13	31	16

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	[illegible]	[illegible]
MARCUS MARIOTA	227	139	1,695	10	7
JAYDEN DANIELS	188	114	1,262	8	3
JOSH JOHNSON	54	34	372	1	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
J. CROSKEY-MERRITT	175	805	4.6	8
CHRIS RODRIGUEZ	112	500	4.5	6
MARCUS MARIOTA	50	297	5.9	1
JAYDEN DANIELS	58	278	4.8	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DEEBO SAMUEL SR.	72	727	10.1	5
ZACH ERTZ	50	504	10.1	4
TERRY McLAURIN	38	582	15.3	3
JEREMY McNICHOLS	25	196	7.8	0

KICKING: Matt Gay, 13-19 FGs, 22-22 PATs, 61 points; Jake Moody, 10-11 FGs, 10-11 PATs, 40 points

TACKLES: Bobby Wagner, 162; Quan Martin, 99

SACKS: Von Miller, 9.0; 2 players tied with 5.5

INTERCEPTIONS: Mike Sainristil, 4; Bobby Wagner, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

NOTHING TO SHOW Between 2019-23, the Commanders made a total of six first-round picks (including two in 2019), but amazingly, none of those six players — Dwayne Haskins Jr. (2019), Montez Sweat (2019), Chase Young (2020), Jamin Davis (2021), Jahan Dotson (2022) and Emmanuel Forbes (2023) — remain on the franchise's roster.

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

LEADING THE WAY Punter **Tress Way** is tied for fifth on the Commanders' all-time games played list with 196, and he could move up to third by the end of this season, behind only Hall of Famer Darrell Green (295) and three-time Super Bowl winner Monte Coleman (215). Way already tops the franchise lists for most punting yards (39,031) and yards per punt (46.9).

PRIOR HISTORY Quarterback Jayden Daniels may find that Joshua Josephs, the Tennessee edge rusher drafted by the Commanders in this year's fifth round, looks vaguely familiar — especially if he looks up at Josephs from flat on his back. In 2022, Josephs, then a freshman at UT, notched his first career sack when he brought down LSU's Daniels.

TRADE TARGET The Commanders' continued lack of a clear No. 2 receiver behind Terry McLaurin resulted in the team frequently being named as a potential trade partner for Brandon Aiyuk, whom the San Francisco 49ers had been seeking to move over the offseason. Though Aiyuk missed all of 2025 with a torn ACL and MCL, he is only three years removed from a stellar 2023 season, when he posted 1,342 receiving yards and an average of 17.9 yards per catch.

TIGHTEN UP The departure of veteran Zach Ertz, a favorite target of Daniels the past two seasons, has left the tight end position in flux. The Commanders signed former Tennessee Titan Chig Okonkwo as their top pass-catching option, and veteran John Bates returns as a blocking specialist, but it remains to be seen whether Daniels finds the same sort of chemistry with Okonkwo that he had with Ertz, or whether Ben Sinnott, a second-round pick in 2024, can take a step forward this season.

SCOUTING THE COMMANDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP WASHINGTON

"When Jayden Daniels got hurt last season, the year went awry as the offense lost one of the top young quarterbacks in the league. Healthy again, Daniels should get back to business this season. … Having a cornerstone Pro Bowl left tackle in Laremy Tunsil, at $30 million per year, gives Daniels the bodyguard he needs to protect his blind side. … Sam Cosmi and Josh Conerly Jr. have formed a strong right side of the line. … Terry McLaurin's contract issue is behind them. Now, the Commanders can enjoy having a top-flight receiver after a full offseason. … Running back is in flux a bit with Jacory Croskey-Merritt and the addition of Rachaad White. … Tim Settle was a nice addition at defensive tackle. … Odafe Oweh is hitting his peak as a young pass-rusher. … Charles Omenihu has bounced around a bit, from Houston to San Francisco to Kansas City, and, now, Washington. Omenihu is a good situational pass-rusher. … Sonny Styles is a transformational talent at middle linebacker and an effective replacement for Bobby Wagner. … K'Lavon Chaisson did a great job rushing the passer last season for the Patriots, a Super Bowl squad. … Nick Cross, a hometown safety signed in free agency, is a strong tackler and has range and instincts. … Leo Chenal and Frankie Luvu add grit and smarts to the defense. … Amik Robertson at nickel should be a glue guy for the defense. … This shapes up as a crucial year for head coach Dan Quinn after making a lot of coaching staff changes in the offseason. If things don't improve this year, he could be out of a job."

2026 COMMANDERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5	Daniels, Jayden	QB	6-4	210	2	LSU	D1-24	D1-Was-24
15	Hartman, Sam	QB	6-1	209	2	Notre Dame	FA-24	FA-Was-24
8	Mariota, Marcus	QB	6-4	222	11	Oregon	FA-Phi-24	D1-Ten-15

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22	Croskey-Merritt, J.	RB	5-11	208	1	Arizona	D7-25	D7-Was-25
34	Ford, Jerome	RB	5-10	210	4	Cincinnati	FA-Cle-26	D5-Cle-22
26	McNichols, Jeremy	RB	5-9	205	9	Boise State	FA-24	D5-TB-17
1	White, Rachaad	RB	6-0	214	4	Arizona State	FA-TB-26	D3-TB-22

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
87	Bates, John	TE	6-6	256	5	Boise State	D4-21	D4-Was-21
88	Brooks, Ja'Corey	WR	6-3	195	1	Louisville	FA-25	FA-Was-25
6	Brown, Dyami	WR	6-0	195	5	North Carolina	FA-Jac-26	D3b-Was-21
13	Burks, Treylon	WR	6-2	225	4	Arkansas	FA-25	D1-Ten-22
89	Cager, Lawrence	TE	6-5	220	5	Georgia	FA-25	FA-NYJ-20
12	Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	6	Florida	FA-Ten-26	D2b-LAR-20
84	Jones, Jacoby	WR	6-3	228	1	UCF	FA-25	FA-Was-25
83	Lane, Jaylin	WR	5-10	196	1	Virginia Tech	D3-25	D3-Was-25
11	McCaffrey, Luke	WR	6-2	195	2	Rice	D3b-24	D3b-Was-24
17	McLaurin, Terry	WR	6-0	210	7	Ohio State	D3-19	D3-Was-19
	Nash, Nick	WR	6-3	195	1	San José State	FA-26	FA-Atl-25
85	Okonkwo, Chig	TE	6-3	238	4	Maryland	FA-Ten-26	D4b-Ten-22
82	Sinnott, Ben	TE	6-4	245	2	Kansas State	D2c-24	D2c-Was-24
80	Yankoff, Colson	TE	6-4	225	2	UCLA	FA-24	FA-Was-24

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
67	Allegretti, Nick	G	6-4	310	7	Illinois	FA-KC-24	D7-KC-19
64	Aumavae-Laulu, M.	G/T	6-5	344	2	Oregon	FA-26	D6-Bal-23
74	Coleman, Brandon	G	6-6	320	2	TCU	D3a-24	D3a-Was-24
72	Conerly Jr., Josh	T	6-4	315	1	Oregon	D1-25	D1-Was-25
	Cooper, Tyler	G	6-6	310	1	Minnesota	FA-26	FA-GB-25
76	Cosmi, Sam	G	6-7	309	5	Texas	D2-21	D2-Was-21
61	Good-Jones, Julian	G	6-5	313	3	Iowa State	FA-25	FA-Phi-20
68	McKay, Timothy	G	6-4	312	1	NC State	FA-25	FA-Was-25
75	Paul, Chris	G	6-4	324	4	Tulsa	D7a-22	D7a-Was-22
79	Sarell, Foster	T	6-6	322	4	Stanford	FA-26	FA-Bal-21
73	Scott, Trent	T	6-5	320	8	Grambling State	FA-Pit-23	FA-LAC-18
78	Tunsil, Laremy	T	6-5	313	10	Ole Miss	T-Hou-25	D1-Mia-16
71	Wylie, Andrew	T/G	6-5	304	8	Eastern Michigan	FA-KC-23	FA-Ind-17

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
92	Armstrong, Dorance	DE	6-4	255	8	Kansas	FA-Dal-24	D4a-Dal-18
50	Barber, Ricky	DT	6-3	295	1	UCF	FA-25	FA-Was-25
45	Chaisson, K'Lavon	DE	6-3	255	6	LSU	FA-NE-26	D1-Jac-20
	Davidson, DJ	DL	6-5	320	4	Arizona State	FA-NYG-26	D5b-NYG-22
93	Jackson, Drake	DE	6-4	273	4	USC	FA-25	D2-SF-22
53	Johnson, D.J.	DE	6-4	270	2	Oregon	FA-26	D3-Car-23
99	Kinlaw, Javon	DT	6-5	319	6	South Carolina	FA-NYJ-25	D1a-SF-20
59	Maguranyanga, T.J.	DE	6-4	222	1	None	FA-25	FA-Was-25
95	Newton, Jer'Zhan	DT	6-2	295	2	Illinois	D2a-24	D2a-Was-24
90	Omenihu, Charles	DE	6-5	280	7	Texas	FA-KC-26	D5-Hou-19
98	Oweh, Odafe	DE	6-5	265	5	Penn State	FA-LAC-26	D1b-Bal-21
94	Payne, Daron	DT	6-3	320	8	Alabama	D1-18	D1-Was-18
97	Settle, Tim	DT	6-3	313	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Hou-26	D5-Was-18
79	Tuttle, Shy	DT	6-3	300	7	Tennessee	W-Ten-25	FA-NO-19
91	Wise Jr., Deatrich	DE	6-5	280	9	Arkansas	FA-NE-25	D4-NE-17

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
57	Bellore, Nick	LB	6-1	250	15	Central Michigan	FA-24	FA-NYJ-11
55	Carter II, Andre	OLB	6-6	257	2	Army	FA-26	FA-Min-23
54	Chenal, Leo	LB	6-3	250	4	Wisconsin	FA-KC-26	D3-KC-22
90	Jean-Baptiste, Jav.	OLB	6-4	260	2	Notre Dame	D7-24	D7-Was-24
51	Kaho, Ale	LB	6-2	230	1	UCLA	FA-25	FA-Was-25
4	Luvu, Frankie	OLB	6-3	235	8	Washington State	FA-Car-24	FA-NYJ-18
58	Magee, Jordan	LB	6-3	225	2	Temple	D5a-24	D5a-Was-24
56	Medrano, Kain	LB	6-3	230	1	UCLA	D6-25	D6-Was-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Amos, Trey	CB	6-1	190	1	Ole Miss	D2-25	D2-Was-25
35	Butler, Percy	S	6-0	190	4	Louisiana	D4-22	D4-Was-22
25	Cross, Nick	S	6-0	212	4	Maryland	FA-Ind-26	D3-Ind-22
3	Harris, Will	S	6-1	206	7	Boston College	FA-NO-25	D3-Det-19
34	Hamilton Sr., Antonio	CB	6-0	188	11	South Carolina St.	FA-25	FA-Oak-16
46	Hawkins III, Tre	CB	6-3	195	3	Old Dominion	FA-25	D6-NYG-23
	Knight, Qwuantrezz	S	6-0	199	1	UCLA	FA-26	FA-SF-22
20	Martin, Quan	S	6-0	195	3	Illinois	D2-23	D2-Was-23
47	McDaniel, Robert	S	6-2	207	1	Jackson State	FA-25	FA-Was-25
18	Owens, Tyler	S	6-2	213	2	Texas Tech	FA-24	FA-Was-24
39	Reaves, Jeremy	S	5-11	200	8	South Alabama	FA-18	FA-Phi-18
2	Robertson, Amik	CB	5-9	183	6	Louisiana Tech	FA-Det-26	D4b-LV-20
29	Rush, Darius	CB	6-2	198	3	South Carolina	FA-25	D5-Ind-23
0	Sainristil, Mike	CB	5-10	182	2	Michigan	D2b-24	D2b-Was-24
37	Vigers, Car'lin	CB	6-2	200	1	ULM	FA-25	FA-Was-25
24	Witherspoon, Ahkello	CB	6-2	215	9	Colorado	FA-LAR-26	D3-SF-17

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Moody, Jake	K	6-1	210	3	Michigan	PS-Chi-25	D3-SF-23
69	Ott, Tyler	LS	6-3	252	11	Harvard	FA-Bal-24	FA-NE-14
10	Way, Tress	P	6-1	220	12	Oklahoma	W-Chi-14	FA-Chi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Terry McLaurin	84	Jacoby Jones
WR	13	Treylon Burks	6	Dyami Brown
WR	11	Luke McCaffrey	14	Antonio Williams (R)
LT	78	Laremy Tunsil	74	Brandon Coleman
LG	75	Chris Paul	68	Timothy McKay
C	67	Nick Allegretti	66	Matt Gulbin (R)
RG	76	Sam Cosmi	71	Andrew Wylie
RT	72	Josh Conerly Jr.	73	Trent Scott
TE	85	Chig Okonkwo	87	John Bates
QB	5	Jayden Daniels	8	Marcus Mariota
RB	22	Jacory Croskey-Merritt	1	Rachaad White

DEFENSE

DE	98	Odafe Oweh	92	Dorance Armstrong
DT	94	Daron Payne	99	Jer'Zhan Newton
DT	99	Javon Kinlaw	97	Tim Settle
DE	45	K'Lavon Chaisson	48	Joshua Josephs (R)
OLB	4	Frankie Luvu	58	Jordan Magee
MLB	52	Sonny Styles (R)	57	Nick Bellore
OLB	54	Leo Chenal	90	Javontae Jean-Batiste
CB	23	Trey Amos	24	Ahkello Witherspoon
CB	0	Mike Sainristil	29	Darius Rush
NB	2	Amik Robertson	18	Tyler Owens
SS	25	Nick Cross	39	Jeremy Reaves
FS	3	Will Harris	20	Quan Martin

SPECIALISTS

P	10	Tress Way	PR	83	Jaylin Lane
K	16	Jake Moody	KR	11	Luke McCaffrey

2,304

The Commanders allowed 2,304 yards after the catch, second-most in the league in 2025 behind the Bengals.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Sonny Styles	ILB	6-5	243	Ohio State
3	Antonio Williams	WR	5-11	195	Clemson
5	Joshua Josephs	Edge	6-3	240	Tennessee
6	Kaytron Allen	RB	5-11	217	Penn State
6	Matt Gulbin	C	6-4	312	Michigan State
7	Athan Kaliakmanis	QB	6-2	216	Rutgers

While the Commanders were widely praised for their draft, particularly for finding value in the late rounds, their strategy appeared to prioritize depth over immediate impact. First-rounder Sonny Styles — a big, quick, rangy off-ball linebacker — is the only pick likely to start for the team in 2026. Antonio Williams could compete with Luke McCaffrey for the starting slot receiver job, but Kaytron Allen could have a tough time making the roster given the depth at running back. Seventh-rounder Athan Kaliakmanis was a bit of a surprise pick, but he fills the need for a No. 3 quarterback and could eventually replace Marcus Mariota as No. 2.

BEARS

NFC NORTH FORECAST

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2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT CAROLINA	1:00
SEPT. 20	**MINNESOTA**	**1:00**
SEPT. 28	**PHILADELPHIA**	**8:15**
OCT. 4	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
OCT. 11	AT GREEN BAY	4:25
OCT. 18	AT ATLANTA	1:00
OCT. 22	**NEW ENGLAND**	**8:15**
NOV. 2	AT SEATTLE	8:15
NOV. 8	**TAMPA BAY**	**8:20**
NOV. 15	BYE	
NOV. 22	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
NOV. 26	AT DETROIT	1:00
DEC. 6	**JACKSONVILLE**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT MIAMI	1:00
DEC. 19	AT BUFFALO	8:20
DEC. 25	**GREEN BAY**	**1:00**
JAN. 3	**DETROIT**	**4:25**
TBD	AT MINNESOTA	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	6
2022	3
2023	7
2024	5
2025 NFC PLAYOFFS	11

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **BEN JOHNSON**
Record With Team: **11-6**
Career Record: **11-6**
Offensive Coordinator: **PRESS TAYLOR**
Defensive Coordinator: **DENNIS ALLEN**
Special Teams Coordinator: **RICHARD HIGHTOWER**
Quarterbacks: **J.T. BARRETT**
Running Backs: **ERIC STUDESVILLE**
Wide Receivers/Assistant Head Coach: **ANTWAAN RANDLE EL**
Tight Ends: **JIM DRAY**
Offensive Line: **DAN ROUSHAR**
Defensive Line: **JEREMY GARRETT**
Linebackers: **RICHARD SMITH**
Defensive Backs/Passing Game Coordinator: **AL HARRIS**
Defensive Assistant/Nickels: **CANNON MATTHEWS**

After three straight last-place finishes, the Bears hired Ben Johnson as their head coach in 2025, and he proceeded to turn them into a championship contender in his first season. Johnson was named an NFL Coach of the Year finalist after Chicago claimed its first NFC North title since the 2018 season and first playoff win since 2010.

Although it was a magical season that reinvigorated their fanbase — the Bears won seven games in which they trailed in the final two minutes — Johnson quickly turned the page. Two days after a divisional playoff loss to the Los Angeles Rams, he told reporters: “There is no building off of this. We go back to square one. We’ve got to start from scratch.”

To match or surpass what the Bears accomplished in 2025, third-year quarterback Caleb Williams must continue to grow in his second season working with Johnson, and the defense needs to generate a more consistent pass rush. In addition, the Bears want to play better early in games so they don’t have to rely on miraculous comebacks. In their final five contests last season, including the playoffs, they scored 47 points in the first three quarters and 77 in the fourth quarter and overtime.

OFFENSE

It appears that the Bears have finally found the franchise quarterback they’ve long been seeking in Williams, who last year set a team passing record with 3,942 yards and ranked fifth in the NFL with a 27:7 TD-to-interception ratio.

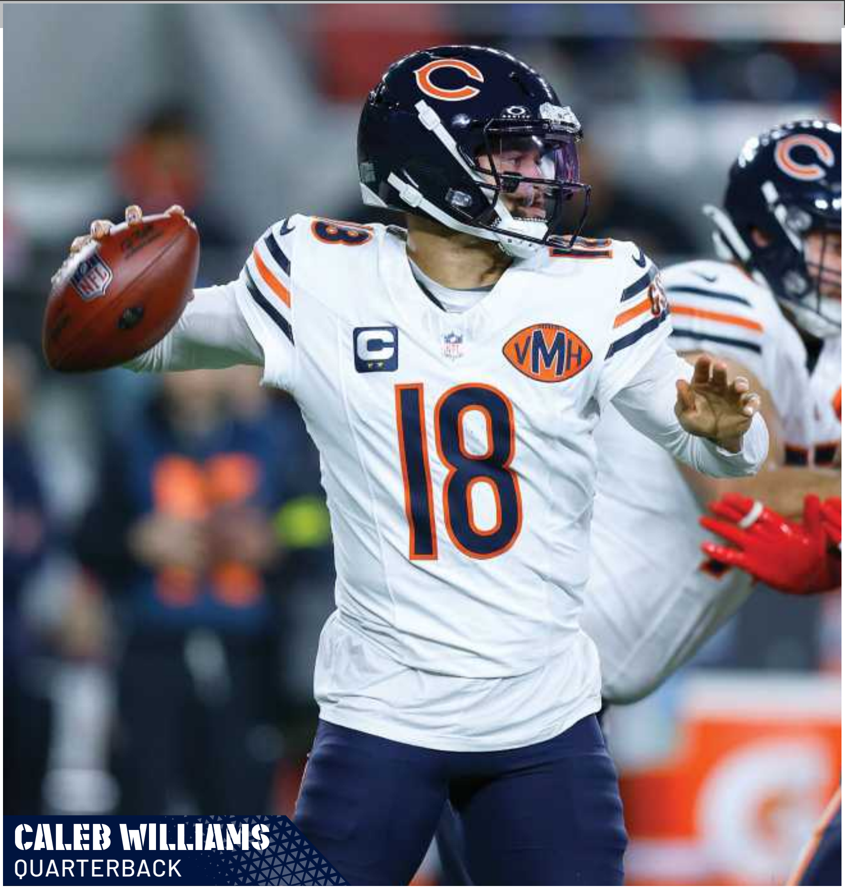
Williams was at his best in crunch time, routinely delivering highlight-reel throws, often after eluding pass-rushers and extending plays. Tom Brady deemed Williams’ 46-yard walk-off touchdown pass in overtime against the Green Bay Packers the best throw of the NFL season. Williams hit some remarkable half-court shots but didn’t always make his layups in 2025, completing only 58.1% of his passes. Johnson’s focus this season will be to help the No. 1 overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft increase that percentage.

Top returning targets in the passing game are tight end Colston Loveland and wide receivers Rome Odunze and Luther Burden III. Last year, Loveland became the first rookie to lead the Bears in receiving yards (713) since Willie Gault in 1983 and the first rookie tight end to do so since Hall of Famer Mike Ditka in 1961. Odunze will look to rebound after being slowed by a foot injury in 2025, while Burden will try to build on a promising rookie year during which he demonstrated elite run-after-catch ability.

The ground game is led by running backs D’Andre Swift (1,087 yards) and 2025 seventh-round pick Kyle Monangai (783), the only NFL teammates to both rush for at least 750 yards last season.

A revamped offensive line fueled the offense’s success in 2025, after general manager Ryan Poles fortified the interior by trading for Pro Bowl guards Joe Thuney and Jonah Jackson and signing free-agent center Drew Dalman. After being voted to his first career Pro Bowl, Dalman unexpectedly retired at age 27. The Bears acted quickly to replace him, trading for veteran Garrett Bradbury and spending a second-round pick on potential long-term solution Logan Jones, who won the Rimington Trophy last year at Iowa as the nation’s best center.

With second-team All-Pro Darnell Wright manning the right tackle position, the only question mark is at left tackle. Rookie Ozzy Trapilo emerged as the starter over the second half of last year but sustained a knee injury in the wild-card win over Green Bay that could sideline him for most or all of the season.


CALEB WILLIAMS
QUARTERBACK

SERGIO ESTRADA-IMAGN IMAGES

The most intriguing competition for a starting position in training camp figures to be at left tackle, with bulked-up fifth-year pro Braxton Jones seemingly the favorite to reclaim his old job. He'll be challenged by Theo Benedet, Kiran Amegadjie and free-agent acquisition Jedrick Wills Jr.

Press Taylor replaces offensive coordinator Declan Doyle, who left the Bears for a similar role with the Baltimore Ravens that will include play-calling duties. The transition is expected to be a smooth one because Taylor was Chicago's passing-game coordinator in 2025, and Johnson remains the play-caller.

DEFENSE

One of the Bears' top offseason priorities was to add speed on defense, and they accomplished that by signing safety Coby Bryant and linebacker Devin Bush and drafting safety Dillon Thieneman in the first round and cornerback Malik Muhammad in the fourth.

Bryant boasts excellent play speed, as does Bush, whose 4.43 in the 40 at the 2019 NFL Scouting Combine was the fastest time among linebackers. His speed was evident last season when he was the league's only player with two interceptions returned for touchdowns, including a 97-yarder. The Bears feel that Bush's speed and pass coverage ability fit perfectly in coordinator Dennis Allen's defense.

Thieneman appealed to the Bears because he possesses tremendous speed, versatility and football character. He ran a 4.35 in the 40-yard dash at the combine and can play both strong and free safety as well as nickelback.

Thieneman will be paired at safety with Bryant, the team's marquee free-agent addition. Johnson views Bryant as a tone-setter, saying: "The best defenses usually have two or three trained killers," and, "When we watched the tape, we felt like that jumped off when Coby was on the field."

The secondary should be the strength of the defense, especially if two-time Pro Bowl cornerback Jaylon Johnson (groin) and talented nickelback Kyler Gordon (calf and groin) return to form after missing parts of last season with injuries.

The Bears are confident that their pass rush will improve. They expect more of the same from veteran Montez Sweat, who has recorded double-digit sacks in two of the past three seasons, and believe that promising third-year pro Austin Booker will take another step. Booker recorded 3.5 sacks in the final four games last season after missing the first seven contests with a knee injury. The Bears are also counting on veteran Dayo Odeyingbo (Achilles) and 2025 second-round pick Shemar Turner (ACL) to rebound from season-ending injuries.

SPECIALISTS

Veteran placekicker Cairo Santos returns after another strong season in which he earned three game balls for clutch performances in wins over the Las Vegas Raiders, Minnesota Vikings and Packers. After making 25-of-30 field-goal attempts in 2025, he remains the most accurate kicker in Bears history, having hit 88.3% of his kicks (159-of-180) over seven seasons.

Punter Tory Taylor also will be back after breaking his own franchise record with a gross average of 47.8 yards in 2025, topping the mark of 47.7 he had set as a rookie in 2024.

One key offseason move was the signing of return specialist Kalif Raymond, who averaged 11.3 yards on 132 punt returns with three touchdowns the past five seasons with the Detroit Lions, earning second-team All-Pro honors in 2022 and '24.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Led by one of the NFL's most highly regarded play-callers in Johnson, the Bears' offense boasts the talent and explosiveness to be one of the top scoring units in the league. The goal is to perform at a high level for 60 minutes, rather than turning it on late in games like they did in 2025, when they were dubbed the "Cardiac Bears."

The defense led the NFL with 33 takeaways and 23 interceptions in 2025 but ranked 23rd in scoring defense, 29th in total defense and tied for 22nd in sacks. If the Bears are to repeat as NFC North champions, they likely must improve their pass rush, be stouter versus the run and reduce the number of big plays that they allow.

2025 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept. 8	Minnesota	L	24-27
Sept. 14	at Detroit	L	21-52
Sept. 21	**DALLAS**	**W**	**31-14**
Sept. 28	**AT LAS VEGAS**	**W**	**25-24**
Oct. 13	**AT WASHINGTON**	**W**	**25-24**
Oct. 19	**NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**26-14**
Oct. 26	at Baltimore	L	16-30
Nov. 2	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**47-42**
Nov. 9	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**24-20**
Nov. 16	**AT MINNESOTA**	**W**	**19-17**
Nov. 23	**PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**31-28**
Nov. 28	**AT PHILADELPHIA**	**W**	**24-15**
Dec. 7	at Green Bay	L	21-28
Dec. 14	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**31-3**
Dec. 20	**GREEN BAY (OT)**	**W**	**22-16**
Dec. 28	at San Francisco	L	38-42
Jan. 4	Detroit	L	16-19
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 10	**GREEN BAY**	**W**	**31-27**
Jan. 18	L.A. Rams (ot)	L	17-20

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	369.5	6	4
RUSHING	144.5	3	1
PASSING	225.1	10	7
SCORING	25.9	9	5
THIRD DOWN %	42.7	7	3
POINTS/PLAY	0.388	T11	T5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	361.8	29	14
RUSHING	134.5	27	14
PASSING	227.2	22	11
SCORING	24.4	23	12
INTERCEPTIONS	23	1	1
SACKS	35	T22	T12
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.394	T21	11
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+22	1	1

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
CALEB WILLIAMS	568	330	3,942	27	7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
D'ANDRE SWIFT	223	1,087	4.9	9
KYLE MONANGAI	169	783	4.6	5
CALEB WILLIAMS	77	388	5.0	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
COLSTON LOVELAND	58	713	12.3	6
DJ MOORE	50	682	13.6	6
LUTHER BURDEN III	47	652	13.9	2
ROME ODUNZE	44	661	15.0	6
OLAMIDE ZACCHEAUS	39	313	8.0	2

KICKING: Cairo Santos, 25-30 FGs, 39-39 PATs, 114 points; Jake Moody, 8-9 FGs, 3-3 PATs, 27 points **TACKLES:** Tremaine Edmunds, 112; 2 players tied with 93; **SACKS:** Montez Sweat, 10.0; Gervon Dexter Sr., 6.0 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Kevin Byard III, 7; Nahshon Wright, 5

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

PLAYING IT SAFE **Dillon Thieneman** was the first safety drafted by the Bears in the first round since they chose Mark Carrier sixth overall in 1990. Carrier was named NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year after recording 10 interceptions — still the single-season franchise record.

STICK TO YOUR DAY JOB Bears quarterback Caleb Williams' prowess on the football field did not carry over to the basketball court in February when he finished in last place at the NBA All-Star Celebrity 3-Point Contest, making only 2-of-15 shots. Two weeks later at the NFL Scouting Combine, head coach Ben Johnson told reporters: "I know what everyone's thinking: Does Caleb have NBA aspirations? And the answer is no. I think football is his calling."

FOND FAREWELL General manager Ryan Poles acknowledged that it was difficult having to trade wide receiver DJ Moore to create salary cap space. But Poles isn't the only one fond of Moore. "DJ is one of my favorite players, will always be one of my favorite players," Poles said. "I knew that that was going to be tough for our organization. My son is a passionate fan of the Chicago Bears. He was not very happy with me at all. I think it was cool DJ sent him a video telling him not to be mad at Dad, [because] it's part of the business."

FAMILY LEGACY Two Bears draft picks come from rich athletic bloodlines. Tight end Sam Roush's maternal great uncle was Los Angeles Rams Hall of Fame defensive end Merlin Olsen. His maternal grandfather Phil Olsen played six NFL seasons, including four with brother Merlin with the Rams. And Roush's father, Luke, played safety at Duke. Defensive tackle Jordan van den Berg's grandfather, Francoise van den Berg, was a bodybuilder who was a two-time finalist at Mr. Universe competitions in 1966 and '67, the latter of which was won by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Van den Berg's grandmother, Joan Ricci, set multiple South African national swimming records.

SCOUTING THE BEARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CHICAGO

"Caleb Williams definitely took the next step last season with Ben Johnson coaching him. He's got what it takes to be a successful quarterback for a long time. … Obviously, the Bears hit on tight end Colston Loveland. Now, they need to utilize him fully. There is a lot of production to be had with a player like him. … This receiving corps isn't flashy, but they have good chemistry with Williams and have been getting better and better. Rome Odunze has a ton of speed. Luther Burden III runs very good routes. … A sneaky good move for Chicago: bringing back swing tackle Braxton Jones. It wasn't that expensive, and you always need a backup plan at tackle. Darnell Wright is a heavy-handed presence at right tackle. I thought they improved center a lot with Garrett Bradbury. … Joe Thuney can play pretty much every spot on the line, but left guard suits him well. … Tyson Bagent is one of the top backup quarterbacks. … D'Andre Swift remains an above-average runner and receiver. … Having Grady Jarrett in the middle of the defense gives them a real gap-shooter. … Montez Sweat is an underrated pass-rusher. … Linebacker is in solid hands with T.J. Edwards and Devin Bush. … Off the bench, Austin Booker gets to the quarterback regularly. … Dillon Thieneman should be plug-and-play as a rookie safety. … Kyler Gordon is one of the top nickels in the game. … Jaylon Johnson is good to go on practically any receiver matchup."

2026 BEARS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Bagent, Tyson	QB	6-3	212	3	Shepherd	FA-23	FA-Chi-23
11 Keenum, Case	QB	6-1	220	13	Houston	FA-Hou-25	FA-Hou-12
18 Williams, Caleb	QB	6-1	226	2	USC	D1a-24	D1a-Chi-24

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38 Brown, Brittain	RB	6-1	205	3	UCLA	FA-Sea-25	D7-LV-22
36 Hankins, Deion	RB	5-11	226	1	Texas State	FA-25	FA-Chi-25
23 Johnson, Roschon	RB	6-0	227	2	Texas	D4a-23	D4a-Chi-23
25 Monangai, Kyle	RB	5-8	207	1	Rutgers	D7-25	D7-Chi-25
4 Swift, D'Andre	RB	5-8	204	6	Georgia	FA-Phi-24	D2-Det-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Alexander, Maurice	WR	5-10	173	1	FIU	FA-25	FA-Det-22
10 Burden III, Luther	WR	6-0	210	1	Missouri	D2a-25	D2a-Chi-25
88 Carlson, Stephen	TE	6-4	248	4	Princeton	FA-Cle-23	FA-Cle-19
80 Ismail, Qadir	TE	6-6	245	1	Samford	FA-25	FA-Bal-24
86 Kalinic, Nikola	TE	6-4	248	2	York	FA-25	FA-Ind-22
85 Kmet, Cole	TE	6-6	257	6	Notre Dame	D2a-20	D2a-Chi-20
84 Loveland, Colston	TE	6-6	241	1	Michigan	D1-25	D1-Chi-25
35 Miller, Scotty	WR	5-9	174	7	Bowling Green	FA-26	D6-TB-19
15 Odunze, Rome	WR	6-3	214	2	Washington	D1b-24	D1b-Chi-24
14 Raymond, Kalif	WR	5-8	180	9	Holy Cross	FA-Det-26	FA-Den-16
83 Richardson, JP	WR	5-11	192	1	TCU	FA-25	FA-Chi-25
9 Walker, Jahdae	WR	6-3	206	1	Texas A&M	FA-25	FA-Chi-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72 Amegadjie, Kiran	OL	6-5	326	2	Yale	D3-24	D3-Chi-24
79 Benedet, Theo	OL	6-7	304	1	British Columbia	FA-24	FA-Chi-24
67 Bradbury, Garrett	OL	6-3	300	7	NC State	T-NE-26	D1-Min-19
60 Hergel, Kyle	OL	6-2	315	2	Boston College	FA-25	FA-NO-24
73 Jackson, Jonah	OL	6-3	319	6	Ohio State	T-LAR-25	D3b-Det-20
70 Jones, Braxton	OL	6-5	303	4	Southern Utah	D5a-22	D5a-Chi-22
74 McFadden, Jordan	OL	6-2	306	3	Clemson	W-LAC-25	D5-LAC-23
65 Newman, Luke	OL	6-3	308	1	Michigan State	D6-25	D6-Chi-25
67 Stromberg, Ricky	OL	6-3	313	2	Arkansas	FA-24	D3-Was-23
62 Thuney, Joe	OL	6-5	301	10	NC State	T-KC-25	D3a-NE-16
75 Trapilo, Ozzy	OL	6-8	312	1	Boston College	D2b-25	D2b-Chi-25
71 Wills Jr., Jedrick	OL	6-4	307	5	Alabama	FA-26	D1-Cle-20
58 Wright, Darnell	OL	6-5	325	3	Tennessee	D1-23	D1-Chi-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
94 Booker, Austin	DL	6-6	245	2	Kansas	D5-24	D5-Chi-24
99 Dexter Sr., Gervon	DL	6-6	326	3	Florida	D2a-23	D2a-Chi-23
96 Ford, Jonathan	DL	6-5	346	1	Miami (Fla.)	PS-GB-24	D7-GB-22
90 Gallimore, Neville	DL	6-2	307	6	Oklahoma	FA-Ind-26	D3-Dal-20
52 Garvin, Jonathan	DL	6-4	257	4	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	D7-GB-20
92 Hardy, Daniel	DL	6-2	255	3	Montana State	FA-23	D7-LAR-22
50 Jarrett, Grady	DL	6-1	294	11	Clemson	FA-Atl-25	D5-Atl-15
59 Kromah, Jamree	DL	6-3	268	1	James Madison	FA-24	FA-Chi-24
97 Lynch, James	DL	6-4	295	6	Baylor	FA-Ten-26	D4b-Min-20
69 Martin, Jeremiah	DL	6-3	265	1	Washington	FA-25	FA-Cle-23
55 Odeyingbo, Dayo	DL	6-5	282	5	Vanderbilt	FA-Ind-25	D2-Ind-21
93 Street, Kentavius	DL	6-2	315	7	NC State	FA-Atl-26	D4-SF-18
98 Sweat, Montez	DL	6-6	270	7	Mississippi State	T-Was-23	D1b-Was-19
95 Turner, Shemar	DL	6-3	293	1	Texas A&M	D2c-25	D2c-Chi-25

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Bush, Devin	LB	5-11	235	7	Michigan	FA-Cle-26	D1-Pit-19
53 Edwards, T.J.	LB	6-0	228	7	Wisconsin	FA-Phi-23	FA-Phi-19
43 Hampton, Dominique	LB	6-3	220	1	Washington	FA-25	D5b-Was-24
47 Hyppolite II, Ruben	LB	6-0	236	1	Maryland	D4-25	D4-Chi-25
48 Jackson, D'Marco	LB	6-1	233	4	Appalachian State	W-NO-25	D5-NO-22
46 Rhattigan, Jon	LB	6-0	236	6	Army	FA-26	FA-Sea-21
57 Sanborn, Jack	LB	6-2	235	4	Wisconsin	FA-Dal-26	FA-Chi-22
45 Sewell, Nephi	LB	6-0	228	3	Utah	FA-26	FA-NO-22
44 Sewell, Noah	LB	6-1	246	3	Oregon	D5a-23	D5a-Chi-23
43 Summers, Ty	LB	6-1	241	7	TCU	FA-25	D7-GB-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39 Blackwell, Josh	DB	5-11	179	4	Duke	W-Phi-22	FA-Phi-22
2 Bryant, Coby	DB	6-1	205	4	Cincinnati	FA-Sea-26	D4-Sea-22
37 Flowers, Dallis	DB	6-1	196	4	Pittsburg State	FA-25	FA-Ind-22
6 Gordon, Kyler	DB	5-11	200	4	Washington	D2a-22	D2a-Chi-22
22 Hicks, Elijah	DB	5-11	204	4	Cal	D7b-22	D7b-Chi-22
1 Johnson, Jaylon	DB	6-0	195	6	Utah	D2b-20	D2b-Chi-20
33 Jones, Jaylon	DB	5-11	190	4	Ole Miss	W-Ari-25	FA-Chi-22
21 Lewis, Cam	DB	5-9	183	6	Buffalo	FA-Buf-26	FA-Buf-19
27 Manning, Dontae	DB	5-10	190	1	Oregon	FA-25	FA-Atl-25
30 Owens, Gervarrius	DB	6-0	200	2	Houston	FA-Min-25	D7-NYG-23
32 Smith, Terell	DB	6-0	204	3	Minnesota	D5b-23	D5b-Chi-23
29 Stevenson, Tyrique	DB	6-0	212	3	Miami (Fla.)	D2b-23	D2b-Chi-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Elkin, Luke	LS	6-1	235	1	Iowa	FA-26	FA-Chi-25
8 Santos, Cairo	K	5-8	173	11	Tulane	FA-20	FA-KC-14
19 Taylor, Tory	P	6-4	225	2	Iowa	D4-24	D4-Chi-24

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	15	Rome Odunze	9	Jahdae Walker
WR	10	Luther Burden III	13	Maurice Alexander
WR	14	Kalif Raymond	81	Zavion Thomas (R)
LT	70	Braxton Jones	71	Jedrick Wills Jr.
LG	62	Joe Thuney	74	Jordan McFadden
C	67	Garrett Bradbury	54	Logan Jones (R)
RG	73	Jonah Jackson	65	Luke Newman
RT	58	Darnell Wright	79	Theo Benedet
TE	84	Colston Loveland	85	Cole Kmet
QB	18	Caleb Williams	17	Tyson Bagent
RB	4	D'Andre Swift	25	Kyle Monangai

DEFENSE

DE	98	Montez Sweat	95	Shemar Turner
DT	50	Grady Jarrett	96	Jordan van den Berg (R)
DT	99	Gervon Dexter Sr.	90	Neville Gallimore
DE	94	Austin Booker	55	Dayo Odeyingbo
OLB	53	T.J. Edwards	48	D'Marco Jackson
MLB	12	Devin Bush	57	Jack Sanborn
CB	1	Jaylon Johnson	24	Malik Muhammad (R)
CB	29	Tyrique Stevenson	32	Terell Smith
NB	6	Kyler Gordon	39	Josh Blackwell
S	2	Coby Bryant	22	Elijah Hicks
S	31	Dillon Thieneman (R)	21	Cam Lewis

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Cairo Santos	PR	14	Kalif Raymond
P	19	Tory Taylor	KR	14	Kalif Raymond

-6.9% Caleb Williams' minus-6.9% completion percentage over expected was the worst among qualified quarterbacks in 2025.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Dillon Thieneman	S	6-0	201	Oregon
2	Logan Jones	C	6-3	299	Iowa
3	Sam Roush	TE	6-6	267	Stanford
3	Zavion Thomas	WR	5-10	190	LSU
4	Malik Muhammad	CB	6-0	182	Texas
5	Keyshaun Elliott	LB	6-1	231	Arizona State
6	Jordan van den Berg	DT	6-3	310	Georgia Tech

Dillon Thieneman projects as a Day 1 starter, a player whom head coach Ben Johnson views as that rare commodity — a safety whom opposing offenses will have to account for: "He is always around the football," Johnson says. "He has a knack for the football. He is a great tackler, and when he does it, he does it with violence." Johnson revealed that the Bears were "smitten" with Logan Jones due to his experience and traits. He may not contribute much as a rookie but could end up anchoring the line for many years. Last season, the Bears ranked in the top five in the NFL in percentage of snaps using three tight ends, and Sam Roush will join Colston Loveland and Cole Kmet to give them a strong trio.

LIONS

NFC NORTH FORECAST
3

They said the playoffs weren't going to be enough going forward. But as the Lions sat watching the postseason last winter, head coach Dan Campbell vowed to get back to the way things were before. "Everything starts with grit, and then we'll work from there," he said after his ascendant team fell from 15-2 and the NFC's No. 1 seed in 2024 to 9-8 and last place in the division in '25.

A patchwork offensive line and an injury-riddled defense played a role in that slide. So did the staff turnover, losing coordinators Ben Johnson and Aaron Glenn to head-coaching jobs in Chicago and New York, respectively. But the way general manager Brad Holmes saw it, Detroit also lost a bit of its identity, particularly in the trenches. "And then you get hit in the face, and it's, like, 'Whoa, maybe it's not good enough,'" he said.

The Lions are determined to get their edge back with what is still one of the league's most talented rosters.

OFFENSE

An electrifying offense effectively short-circuited last fall under new coordinator John Morton, who lasted only one season in Detroit. Campbell took over play-calling duties in Week 10, and the Lions still ranked in the league's top five in scoring and total yards. But a retooled offensive line never really found its footing after All-Pro center Frank Ragnow's abrupt retirement last June.

That led to a complete overhaul this spring, as the Lions parted company with left tackle Taylor Decker — the team's longest-tenured player — and center Graham Glasgow. Holmes' lone big splash in free agency was Cade Mays, a hulking 27-year-old center coming off a breakout season in Carolina. Detroit used its first-round pick on Clemson's Blake Miller, a right tackle who made 54 consecutive starts in college, and the plan is for All-Pro Penei Sewell to take Decker's old spot protecting Jared Goff's blind side. Tate Ratledge, a 2025 second-round pick, is the other lock to start at right guard, while the Lions added insurance and depth with tackle Larry Borom and guards Juice Scruggs and Ben Bartch.

Goff, who has now played more games for the Lions than he did for the Rams, remains the unflappable leader of this unit. Even with the breakdowns on the line, he still ranked second in the NFL in passing yards and touchdowns last season, and his accuracy remains elite. But he'll be working with his third coordinator in three years, as Drew Petzing takes over after spending three seasons in Arizona. Petzing's creative, adaptable scheme should help rejuvenate the run game, and Campbell also brought in Mike Kafka, who finished the 2025 season as the New York Giants' interim head coach, to be the passing game coordinator.

The line's struggles didn't stop Jahmyr Gibbs from a third straight Pro Bowl nod after he posted career-best receiving totals — 77 catches, 616 yards, five TDs — and finished fifth in the NFL in yards from scrimmage. But the backfield job share did tilt heavily away from David Montgomery, who was traded to Houston in March. Isiah Pacheco, a two-time Super Bowl champ in Kansas City, figures to boost the Lions' flagging short-yardage success.

The receiving corps returns largely intact, led by three-time All-Pro Amon-Ra St. Brown and Jameson Williams, who posted his first 1,000-yard season in 2025. The Lions were the only team in the league with two top-10 receivers in yardage. Coaches expect a big step from Isaac TeSlaa, who flashed his playmaking ability (six TD catches) as a rookie. Detroit signed former Arizona Cardinal Greg Dortch to fill Kalif Raymond's slot role after the latter signed with Chicago.

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
SEPT. 17	AT BUFFALO	8:15
SEPT. 27	**N.Y. JETS**	**1:00**
OCT. 4	AT CAROLINA	8:20
OCT. 11	AT ARIZONA	4:25
OCT. 18	BYE	
OCT. 25	**GREEN BAY**	**4:25**
NOV. 1	**MINNESOTA**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	AT MIAMI	1:00
NOV. 15	**NEW ENGLAND (MUNICH)**	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 22	**TAMPA BAY**	**1:00**
NOV. 26	**CHICAGO**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	AT ATLANTA	1:00
DEC. 13	**TENNESSEE**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	AT MINNESOTA	8:20
DEC. 28	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**8:15**
JAN. 3	AT CHICAGO	4:25
TBD	**GREEN BAY**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	3
2022	9
2023 NFC PLAYOFFS	12
2024 NFC PLAYOFFS	15
2025	9

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **DAN CAMPBELL**
Record With Team: **48-36-1**
Career Record: **53-43-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **DREW PETZING**
Defensive Coordinator: **KELVIN SHEPPARD**
Special Teams Coordinator: **DAVE FIPP**
Quarterbacks: **MARK BRUNELL**
Pass Game Coordinator: **MIKE KAFKA**
Running Backs: **TASHARD CHOICE**
Associate Head Coach/Wide Receivers: **SCOTTIE MONTGOMERY**
Tight Ends: **STEVE OLIVER**
Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line: **HANK FRALEY**
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: **KACY RODGERS**
Linebackers: **SHAUN DION HAMILTON**
Senior Defensive Assistant/Outside Linebackers: **DAVE CORRAO**
Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **DESHEA TOWNSEND**
Associate Head Coach/Safeties: **JIM O'NEIL**

JAHMYR GIBBS
RUNNING BACK

JUNFU HAN

Sam LaPorta is one of the league's most productive tight ends, but the former Pro Bowler missed the final eight games last season due to a herniated disc that required surgery. He expects to be full-go and is in line for a contract extension.

DEFENSE

It has taken Holmes longer to build a defense through the draft, but now that the investment is there, it's time to start seeing a better return. That'll be the challenge facing defensive coordinator Kelvin Sheppard, the former Glenn apprentice who endured some growing pains in his first season as a play-caller. Injuries didn't help, and that's still a concern heading into this fall, particularly in the secondary, where the NFL's best safety tandem is a huge question mark. Brian Branch likely won't be back until midseason after suffering a torn Achilles last December, while former All-Pro Kerby Joseph's lingering knee problems remain a concern. Holmes added depth in free agency at the position — super-sub Christian Izien (Tampa Bay) could fill Branch's role until he returns — but didn't take a safety in the draft.

Sheppard is also banking on a healthy return from starting cornerbacks D.J. Reed and Terrion Arnold, though the latter has yet to live up to his first-round draft hype and was also linked to a robbery case in Florida this winter. The Lions also have Arnold's oft-injured draft classmate, Ennis Rakestraw Jr., who faces a make-or-break training camp. At nickel, newly signed Roger McCreary will get pushed by another tough-nosed competitor in rookie fifth-rounder Keith Abney II.

The Lions played more base defense than any other NFL team last season, but they're promising a different look this year. Malcolm Rodriguez is a holdover option to replace weakside linebacker Alex Anzalone, who left for Tampa Bay in free agency. But the Lions also drafted Michigan's Jimmy Rolder with that role in mind. Jack Campbell, another rising star eligible for an extension, is the leader in the middle of the defense, while Derrick Barnes returns as the Sam linebacker.

Up front is where the heavy draft capital was spent, though. And after a lengthy search, Detroit finally may have found a long-term, tag-team partner for All-Pro Aidan Hutchinson, who led the NFL in pressures (100) last season while playing more than 1,000 snaps. The Lions traded up in the second round to draft another Michigan star in Derrick Moore, a powerful edge-setter who won a national title in Ann Arbor and fits the Lions' scheme. They also brought in DJ Wonnum as an early-down option and brought back Levi Onwuzurike, who missed all of 2025 with injury.

Much like with the offensive line, the makeover of the defensive front now seems complete, as all four projected starters — Alim McNeill and 2025 first-round pick Tyleik Williams man the tackle spots — are 25 or younger.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Jake Bates couldn't match his storybook rookie success in Year 2, as his field-goal accuracy fell off. But he remained perfect in clutch situations and handled the new kickoff rules well, so he'll be back on a veteran-minimum deal with something to prove. No such worries with punter Jack Fox, also entering a contract year. He posted another top-10 finish in net yardage and allowed only two touchbacks. Dortch is the top option to replace Raymond, who departed as the franchise leader in punt return yardage. Rookie Kendrick Law, a special-teams ace as a gunner and returner, also will get a long look.

FINAL ANALYSIS

After going from first to worst in the NFC North and watching their former coordinator lead the Bears to their first division title since 2018, the Lions are back in their comfort zone with a chip on their shoulder. They're eager to feast on a last-place schedule, with only seven games against 2025 playoff teams and only two non-divisional opponents coming off winning seasons. If the revamped line jells, the offense will remain a top-five unit. With even marginal improvement on the defensive side, Detroit could find its way back to the playoffs.

2025 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 7	at Green Bay	L	13-27
Sept. 14	**CHICAGO**	**W**	**52-21**
Sept. 22	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**38-30**
Sept. 28	**CLEVELAND**	**W**	**34-10**
Oct. 5	**AT CINCINNATI**	**W**	**37-24**
Oct. 12	at Kansas City	L	17-30
Oct. 20	**TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**24-9**
Nov. 2	Minnesota	L	24-27
Nov. 9	**AT WASHINGTON**	**W**	**44-22**
Nov. 16	at Philadelphia	L	9-16
Nov. 23	**N.Y. GIANTS (OT)**	**W**	**34-27**
Nov. 27	Green Bay	L	24-31
Dec. 4	**DALLAS**	**W**	**44-30**
Dec. 14	at L.A. Rams	L	34-41
Dec. 21	Pittsburgh	L	24-29
Dec. 25	at Minnesota	L	10-23
Jan. 4	**AT CHICAGO**	**W**	**19-16**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	373.2	5	3
RUSHING	120.1	14	8
PASSING	253.1	3	3
SCORING	28.3	T4	3
THIRD DOWN %	38.8	20	11
POINTS/PLAY	0.452	4	3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	331.9	18	9
RUSHING	114.5	14	5
PASSING	217.4	20	10
SCORING	24.3	22	11
INTERCEPTIONS	13	T11	T6
SACKS	49	T4	T2
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.393	20	10
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+4	9	6

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JARED GOFF	578	393	4,564	34	8

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JAHMYR GIBBS	243	1,223	5.0	13
DAVID MONTGOMERY	158	716	4.5	8

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
AMON-RA ST. BROWN	117	1,401	12.0	11
JAHMYR GIBBS	77	616	8.0	5
JAMESON WILLIAMS	65	1,117	17.2	7
SAM LAPORTA	40	489	12.2	3
KALIF RAYMOND	24	289	12.0	1
DAVID MONTGOMERY	24	192	8.0	0

KICKING: Jake Bates, 27-34 FGs, 54-56 PATs, 135 points; **TACKLES:** Jack Campbell, 176; Alex Anzalone, 95; **SACKS:** Aidan Hutchinson, 14.5; Al-Quadin Muhammad, 11.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Kerby Joseph, 3; D.J. Reed, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GOING IT ALONE After conducting joint practices with other NFL teams the past four preseasons, the Lions have decided against it this summer. **Dan Campbell** said he felt like it was a big help during the Lions' rebuild in 2022 and '23, but the past couple of years "it just felt counterproductive," the head coach said. "So let's just keep it about us and let's go to work." That switch likely means the Lions' starters will see some action in preseason games this year. As part of the offseason overhaul, the team also eliminated the traditional rookie minicamp in May and moved its mandatory full-squad minicamp to the end of the offseason program in June.

ELECTION YEAR The Lions are searching for a new president, as Rod Wood, who has been team president and CEO since 2015, is retiring. The team began a global search this winter, and a panel that includes principal owner Sheila Hamp, vice chairman Bill Ford Jr. and senior advisor Chris Spielman began interviewing candidates in April. "I think the organization is ready for a transition," Wood said. "We've got good leadership in place, a really good football team in place, and it seems like the right time to hand in the baton."

INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE The Lions are headed back to Europe this season to play an international game for the first time since 2015. And it's no accident that they'll be playing in Germany, where the Lions own international marketing rights through the NFL. But it is an added bonus that one of their star players, Amon-Ra St. Brown, speaks fluent German and has dual citizenship thanks to his German-born mother, Miriam.

SCOUTING THE LIONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DETROIT

"I thought that signing Cade Mays as their new center, replacing Frank Ragnow, solved that problem. Mays had a ton of offers around the league, including the Texans. … Amon-Ra St. Brown is the consummate route-runner and YAC guy. He makes all the tough plays. … Jared Goff throws a nice, catchable football. … Jahmyr Gibbs has earned himself a major payday. That deal, when it happens, will be huge. They're working on it now. … St. Brown isn't the only receiving threat. The Lions have a lot of weapons for Goff to throw to, including Jameson Williams and Isaac TeSlaa. … A lot of teams wish they had a left tackle as good as Penei Sewell. … Blake Miller was one of the most reliable right tackles in college football. He fits the Lions' mold perfectly. … Aidan Hutchinson keeps getting better and better. The work ethic with this guy and his versatility are really impressive. … I thought they nailed the Tyleik Williams draft pick a year ago. Still feel that way. … The plan is to start Derrick Moore right away on the edge. He was on a lot of NFL teams' wish lists. … Just because the Lions didn't do a new deal for Jack Campbell yet doesn't mean it's not under heavy consideration. Stay tuned. … The Lions don't seem concerned about Terrion Arnold's off-field issues this offseason, and he wasn't charged with a crime. … The Lions just need their excellent safety duo of Kerby Joseph and Brian Branch to be healthy this year. … D.J. Reed should help this secondary a lot. … Malcolm Rodriguez is an undersized 'backer, but he sticks people."

JUNFU HAN

2026 LIONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5	Bridgewater, Teddy	QB	6-2	215	11	Louisville	FA-TB-26	D1-Min-14
16	Goff, Jared	QB	6-4	217	10	Cal	T-LAR-21	D1-LAR-16

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0	Gibbs, Jahmyr	RB	5-9	202	3	Alabama	D1a-23	D1a-Det-23
10	Pacheco, Isiah	RB	5-10	216	4	Rutgers	FA-KC-26	D7b-KC-22
25	Saylors, Jacob	RB	5-11	195	1	East Tennessee St.	FA-25	FA-Cin-23
26	Small, Jabari	RB	5-11	213	1	Tennessee	FA-25	FA-Ten-24
33	Vaki, Sione	RB	5-11	216	2	Utah	D4b-24	D4b-Det-24

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
83	Conklin, Tyler	TE	6-3	248	8	Central Michigan	FA-LAC-26	D5a-Min-18
15	Cunningham, Malik	WR	6-1	190	2	Louisville	FA-25	FA-NE-23
8	Dortch, Greg	WR	5-7	180	5	Wake Forest	FA-Ari-26	FA-NYJ-19
82	Gordon, Thomas	TE	6-5	250	1	Northwestern	FA-26	FA-Chi-25
40	Horton, Zach	TE	6-4	252	1	Indiana	FA-25	FA-Det-25
85	Kennedy, Tom	WR	5-10	195	4	Bryant	FA-23	FA-Det-19
87	LaPorta, Sam	TE	6-3	245	3	Iowa	D2a-23	D2a-Det-23
19	Lovett, Dominic	WR	5-10	185	1	Georgia	D7b-25	D7b-Det-25
13	Meeks, Jackson	WR	6-2	218	1	Syracuse	FA-25	FA-Det-25
14	St. Brown, Amon-Ra	WR	6-0	202	5	USC	D4a-21	D4a-Det-21
18	TeSlaa, Isaac	WR	6-4	214	1	Arkansas	D3-25	D3-Det-25
1	Williams, Jameson	WR	6-1	182	4	Alabama	D1b-22	D1b-Det-22
89	Wright, Brock	TE	6-5	254	5	Notre Dame	FA-21	FA-Det-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
78	Bartch, Ben	G	6-6	315	6	St. John's (Minn.)	FA-SF-26	D4-Jac-20
79	Borom, Larry	T	6-5	325	5	Missouri	FA-Mia-26	D5-Chi-21
77	Cochran, Devin	OL	6-7	330	2	Georgia Tech	FA-25	FA-Cin-22
65	Eguakun, Kingsley	OL	6-3	305	1	Florida	FA-24	FA-Det-24
71	Frazier, Miles	OL	6-6	325	1	LSU	D5-25	D5-Det-25
73	Mahogany, Christian	OL	6-3	327	2	Boston College	D6b-24	D6b-Det-24
59	Manu, Giovanni	OL	6-7	350	2	British Columbia	D4a-24	D4a-Det-24
64	Mays, Cade	C	6-6	325	4	Tennessee	FA-Car-26	D6b-Car-22
65	McLaughlin, Seth	C	6-4	304	1	Ohio State	FA-26	FA-Cin-25
63	Miller, Mason	G	6-7	310	1	North Dakota State	FA-25	FA-Det-25
62	Niese, Michael	OL	6-5	300	2	Temple	FA-23	FA-Den-22
69	Ratledge, Tate	OL	6-6	315	1	Georgia	D2-25	D2-Det-25
70	Scruggs, Juice	C/G	6-3	310	3	Penn State	T-Hou-26	D2-Hou-23
58	Sewell, Penei	T	6-5	335	5	Oregon	D1-21	D1-Det-21
75	Sorsdal, Colby	OL	6-6	315	3	William & Mary	D5-23	D5-Det-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96	Adams, Myles	DL	6-2	299	4	Rice	FA-24	FA-Car-20
99	Hassanein, Ahmed	DE	6-2	275	1	Boise State	D6-25	D6-Det-25
97	Hutchinson, Aidan	DE	6-7	268	4	Michigan	D1a-22	D1a-Det-22
93	Lacy, Tyler	DL	6-4	279	3	Oklahoma State	W-Jac-25	D4-Jac-23
54	McNeill, Alim	DL	6-2	310	5	NC State	D3a-21	D3a-Det-21
95	Onwuzurike, Levi	DL	6-3	304	5	Washington	D2-21	D2-Det-21
90	Smith, Chris	DL	6-1	316	2	Notre Dame	FA-24	FA-Det-23
57	Tufele, Jay	DL	6-3	305	5	USC	FA-NYJ-26	D4b-Jac-21
92	Turner, Payton	DE	6-6	275	5	Houston	FA-Dal-26	D1-NO-21
91	Williams, Tyleik	DL	6-3	328	1	Ohio State	D1-25	D1-Det-25
94	Wingo, Mekhi	DL	6-0	288	2	LSU	D6a-24	D6a-Det-24
98	Wonnum, DJ	DE	6-5	258	6	South Carolina	FA-Car-26	D4a-Min-20

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35	Bachie, Joe	LB	6-2	235	5	Michigan State	FA-Ten-26	FA-NO-20
55	Barnes, Derrick	LB	6-0	240	5	Purdue	D4b-21	D4b-Det-21
46	Campbell, Jack	LB	6-5	246	3	Iowa	D1b-23	D1b-Det-23
11	Clark, Damone	LB	6-2	245	4	LSU	FA-Hou-26	D5c-Dal-22
53	Nowaske, Trevor	LB	6-3	237	2	Saginaw Valley St.	W-Ari-24	FA-Det-23
44	Rodriguez, Malcolm	LB	5-11	230	4	Oklahoma State	D6a-22	D6a-Det-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6	Arnold, Terrion	CB	6-0	195	2	Alabama	D1-24	D1-Det-24
32	Branch, Brian	DB	6-0	203	3	Alabama	D2b-23	D2b-Det-23
36	Clark, Chuck	S	6-0	205	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Pit-26	D6-Bal-17
30	Dorsey, Khalil	CB	5-8	188	4	Northern Arizona	FA-22	FA-Bal-20
12	Harper, Thomas	S	5-8	195	2	Notre Dame	W-LV-25	FA-LAC-24
27	Izien, Christian	S	5-10	200	3	Rutgers	FA-TB-26	FA-TB-23
17	Jackson, Dan	S	6-1	195	1	Georgia	D7a-25	D7a-Det-25
31	Joseph, Kerby	S	6-0	210	4	Illinois	D3-22	D3-Det-22
29	Maddox, Avonte	DB	5-9	191	8	Pitt	FA-Phi-25	D4a-Phi-18
21	McCreary, Roger	CB	5-11	190	4	Auburn	FA-LAR-26	D2-Ten-22
2	Rakestraw Jr., Ennis	CB	5-11	188	2	Missouri	D2-24	D2-Det-24
4	Reed, D.J.	CB	5-9	190	8	Kansas State	FA-NYJ-25	D5-SF-18
24	Strickland, Loren	S	5-10	202	2	Ball State	FA-24	FA-Det-24
38	Whiteside, Nick	CB	6-1	200	1	Saginaw Valley St.	FA-25	FA-Was-23
23	Ya-Sin, Rock	CB	5-11	195	7	Temple	FA-SF-25	D2-Ind-19

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39	Bates, Jake	K	5-10	202	2	Arkansas	FA-24	FA-TB-23
3	Fox, Jack	P	6-2	218	6	Rice	FA-19	FA-KC-19
49	Hatten, Hogan	LS	6-2	239	2	Idaho	FA-24	FA-Det-24

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Amon-Ra St. Brown	8	Greg Dortch
WR	1	Jameson Williams	85	Tom Kennedy
WR	18	Isaac TeSlaa	13	Jackson Meeks
LT	58	Penei Sewell	59	Giovanni Manu
LG	73	Christian Mahogany	71	Miles Frazier
C	64	Cade Mays	70	Juice Scruggs
RG	69	Tate Ratledge	78	Ben Bartch
RT	76	Blake Miller (R)	79	Larry Borom
TE	87	Sam LaPorta	89	Brock Wright
QB	16	Jared Goff	5	Teddy Bridgewater
RB	0	Jahmyr Gibbs	10	Isiah Pacheco

DEFENSE

DE	97	Aidan Hutchinson	92	Payton Turner
DL	54	Alim McNeill	93	Tyler Lacy
DL	91	Tyleik Williams	95	Levi Onwuzurike
DE	98	DJ Wonnum	9	Derrick Moore (R)
LB	46	Jack Campbell	44	Malcolm Rodriguez
LB	55	Derrick Barnes	11	Damone Clark
CB	4	D.J. Reed	23	Rock Ya-Sin
CB	6	Terrion Arnold	2	Ennis Rakestraw Jr.
NB		Roger McCreary	28	Keith Abney II (R)
SS	31	Kerby Joseph	12	Thomas Harper
FS	32	Brian Branch	27	Christian Izien

SPECIALISTS

K	39	Jake Bates	KR	33	Sione Vaki
P	3	Jack Fox	PR	8	Greg Dortch

130.3

The Lions lost 130.3 adjusted games to injury last year per FTN Data, the second-highest total in the NFL.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Blake Miller	OT	6-6	317	Clemson
2	Derrick Moore	DE	6-3	255	Michigan
4	Jimmy Rolder	LB	6-2	238	Michigan
5	Keith Abney II	CB	5-9	187	Arizona State
5	Kendrick Law	WR	5-11	203	Kentucky
6	Skyler Gill-Howard	DT	6-0	280	Texas Tech
7	Tyre West	DT	6-1	278	Tennessee

The Lions loved Blake Miller's toughness and durability, and he should be a plug-and-play rookie starter at right tackle. The Lions traded up to grab Derrick Moore, making him Detroit's first edge rusher drafted on Day 1 or 2 since 2022. Jimmy Rolder doesn't have much starting experience, but he's a rangy tackling machine to play the Will linebacker spot. Keith Abney II slipped to the fifth round, but he could be in the mix for playing time inside at the nickel as a rookie. With Kalif Raymond gone, the Lions hope Kendrick Law can develop into their next slot receiver and punt returner. Skyler Gill-Howard is a rotational 3-technique who fills a void created in free agency, while Tyre West fits the profile of a big edge who can kick inside in sub-packages.

PACKERS

NFC NORTH FORECAST

2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT MINNESOTA	4:25
SEPT. 20	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
SEPT. 24	**ATLANTA**	**8:15**
OCT. 4	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
OCT. 11	**CHICAGO**	**4:25**
OCT. 18	**DALLAS**	**8:20**
OCT. 25	AT DETROIT	4:25
OCT. 29	**CAROLINA**	**8:15**
NOV. 8	AT NEW ENGLAND	4:25
NOV. 15	**MINNESOTA**	**1:00**
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 25	AT L.A. RAMS	8:00
DEC. 6	AT NEW ORLEANS	1:00
DEC. 13	**BUFFALO**	**8:20**
DEC. 20	**MIAMI**	**1:00**
DEC. 25	AT CHICAGO	1:00
JAN. 4	**HOUSTON**	**8:15**
TBD	**DETROIT**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 NFC PLAYOFFS	13
2022	8
2023 NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2024 NFC PLAYOFFS	11
2025 NFC PLAYOFFS	9

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **MATT LAFLEUR**
Record With Team: **76-40-1**
Career Record: **76-40-1**
Offensive Coordinator: **ADAM STENAVICH**
Defensive Coordinator: **JONATHAN GANNON**
Special Teams Coordinator: **CAM ACHORD**
Quarterbacks/Asst. Head Coach: **LUKE GETSY**
Running Backs: **BEN SIRMANS**
Wide Receivers: **NOAH PAULEY**
Passing Game Coordinator: **JASON VRABLE**
Tight Ends: **JOHN DUNN**
Offensive Line: **LUKE BUTKUS**
Defensive Line: **VINCE OGHOBAASE**
Linebackers: **SAM SIEFKES**
Outside Linebackers/Run Game Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach: **DEMARCUS COVINGTON**
Secondary/Pass Game Coordinator: **BOBBY BABICH**
Cornerbacks: **DANIEL BULLOCKS**

Even Brian Gutekunst found himself wondering what might've been.

In the immediate aftermath of the 2025 season, the Green Bay Packers general manager had gone to painstaking lengths to avoid making excuses for the team's five consecutive losses — including a gut-wrenching first-round playoff loss to the archrival Chicago Bears in which Green Bay blew an 18-point halftime lead — to end the year.

But as a new season approached, even Gutekunst had to confess that he, like many Packers fans, couldn't help but think about how the season might've been different had his team had two of its biggest stars — edge rusher Micah Parsons and tight end Tucker Kraft, both of whom had been lost for the season to anterior cruciate ligament tears — during those final five games.

"Both those guys, [it] would've been nice to see how that back end of the season would have unfolded if they were there. And a few others," Gutekunst confessed. "Those guys are true pros. They're very eager to get back. There's a lot in front of them."

In their three seasons since transitioning away from future Hall of Fame quarterback Aaron Rodgers, the Packers have gone 29-21-1 in regular-season play and earned the seventh and final NFC playoff berth in all three postseasons.

But with just one playoff win, some in the team's passionate-but-sometimes-entitled fan base were hoping new team president/CEO Ed Policy would shake up the status quo and move on from head coach Matt LaFleur, despite his 76-40-1 record (plus 3-6 in the playoffs). Instead, Policy stuck by his coach — and Gutekunst — and gave them both multi-year contract extensions instead of pink slips.

But those still come with pressure, and while pressure may be a privilege, expectations for the franchise's first Super Bowl berth in a decade and a half are unavoidable.

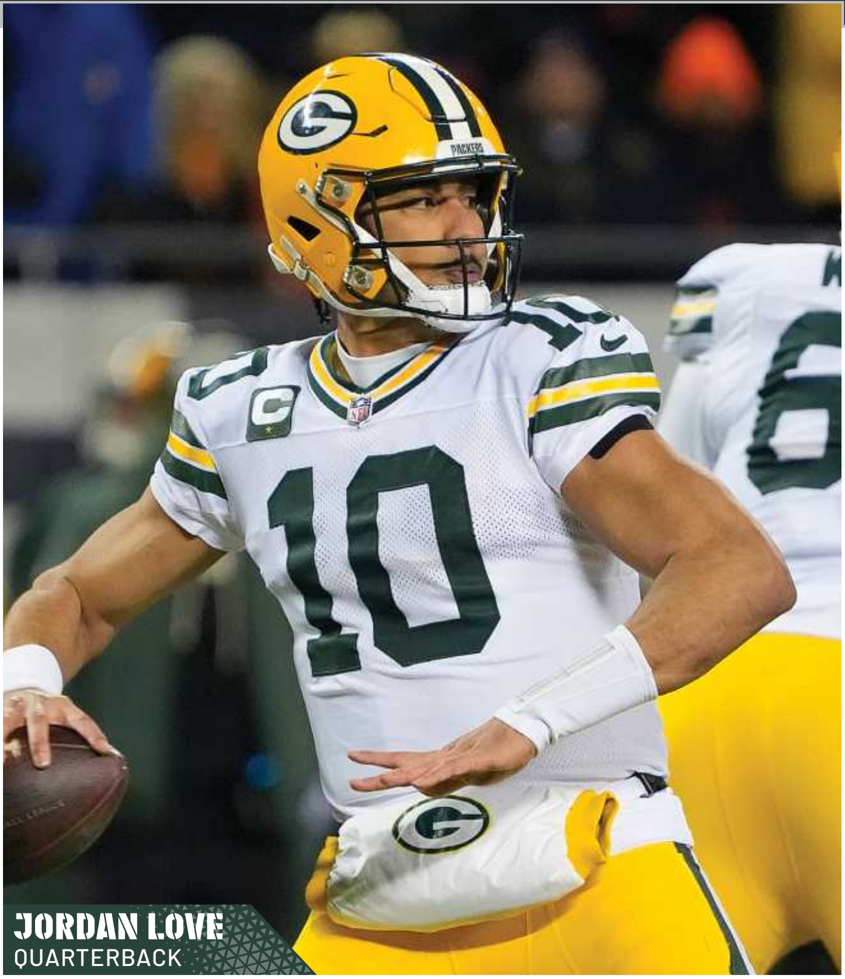
Having lost far too many winnable games and admitted that some players were disgruntled about their roles last season, LaFleur knows that better than anyone.

"You've got to capitalize on the opportunities. If you look back at last season, there were multiple instances where we didn't get it done," LaFleur said. "If a play goes differently, you get a different result. But it didn't, so you've got to own it, and you've got to try to learn from it and just move forward. But it's going to take a consistent approach, and the buy-in is going to be absolutely critical."

OFFENSE

LaFleur said during the offseason that he would take the approach that it's "Year 1 all over again," rebuilding the offense from the ground up. That starts with Love, who took another step in his development as a franchise quarterback (101.2 passer rating, sixth in the league) but did not make it to the Super Bowl in his age-27 season the way predecessors Brett Favre and Rodgers did. "As good as he's been for us," Gutekunst said, "I do think he'll continue to get better." The Packers signed Tyrod Taylor to back up Love.

Veteran running back Josh Jacobs, who ran for exactly 400 fewer yards (929) last season than he had in his first season with the Packers (1,329), dealt with a painful, nagging knee injury and an inconsistent run-blocking offensive line. The Packers don't have a proven backup, making Jacobs' health paramount for the offense to function.



JORDAN LOVE
QUARTERBACK

At wide receiver, the team let Romeo Doubs leave for New England in free agency and traded Dontayvion Wicks to Philadelphia, streamlining a position where even LaFleur acknowledged that there were too many mouths to feed. That "problem" — LaFleur's word — has been resolved with Christian Watson, Jayden Reed and 2025 first-round pick Matthew Golden as the clear-cut 1-2-3 in the pecking order.

Assuming Kraft returns to form, the biggest question is the offensive line, where 2024 first-round pick Jordan Morgan takes over at left tackle after playing just about everywhere else on the line. Center Sean Rhyan must elevate his play after on-the-job training following his midseason move to the position.

DEFENSE

While Parsons is undeniably the catalyst for the Packers' defense — at the time of his injury, he had 12.5 sacks, making him the first player in NFL history to register at least 12 sacks in each of his first five NFL seasons — he cannot do it alone. And after what he cost the team both financially and in terms of trade capital, the team won't rush Parsons back into action.

But there's no denying that he's a field-tilter. New defensive coordinator and former Arizona Cardinals head coach Jonathan Gannon, who is replacing new Miami Dolphins head coach Jeff Hafley in the job, is counting on other players to raise their games to augment Parsons' dominance.

Up front, the Packers are counting on Devonte Wyatt and Lukas Van Ness to be the difference-makers they've flashed the ability to be, and third-year linebacker Edgerrin Cooper needs to make the splash plays that were so prevalent his rookie year. Veteran Zaire Franklin, acquired in a trade to replace departed free agent Quay Walker, must also show that he can regain his 2024 All-Pro form.

While the team may have the best safety trio in all of football in Xavier McKinney, Evan Williams and Javon Bullard — a perfect fit for Gannon, who likes to play three safeties simultaneously — the biggest question is at cornerback.

Although veteran Keisean Nixon, the nominal No. 1 cornerback, is solid, fourth-year man Carrington Valentine had his ups and downs after last year's free-agent addition, Nate Hobbs, struggled with injuries and inconsistency.

As a result, veteran free-agent pickup Benjamin St-Juste, second-round pick Brandon Cisse and sixth-round pick Domani Jackson all have a chance to prove they're worthy of playing a primary role at the position.

SPECIALISTS

After riding the rookie placekicker roller coaster in 2023 (Anders Carlson) and 2024 (Brayden Narveson), the Packers committed to a reliable veteran, Brandon McManus — only to see him miss three kicks in the playoff loss to the Bears. Now, they're turning to a rookie, sixth-round pick Trey Smack, once again to handle the job. The Packers traded up to select Smack, so they're confident in him.

New special teams coordinator Cam Achord has no such uncertainty about the punter (Daniel Whelan), long-snapper (Matt Orzech) or returner (free-agent pickup Skyy Moore), however.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Sitting at 9-3-1 and holding a nine-point third-quarter lead on a Denver Broncos team that had won 10 straight at the time and would go on to be the AFC's No. 1 playoff seed, the Packers were convinced that they had a Super Bowl-caliber team on their hands — until Parsons (and starting right tackle Zach Tom) went down. That's why Gutekunst didn't do any major overhauling of the roster in the offseason. But with questionable depth behind those front-line players — particularly on the offensive line — the reality is this: If the Packers stay healthy, they are title contenders. But if injuries strike again, they're almost certainly cooked.

DAVID BANKS-IMAGN IMAGES

2025 RESULTS (9-7-1)

Sept. 7	**DETROIT**	**W**	**27-13**
Sept. 11	**WASHINGTON**	**W**	**27-18**
Sept. 21	at Cleveland	L	10-13
Sept. 28	at Dallas (ot)	T	40-40
Oct. 12	**CINCINNATI**	**W**	**27-18**
Oct. 19	**AT ARIZONA**	**W**	**27-23**
Oct. 26	**AT PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**35-25**
Nov. 2	Carolina	L	13-16
Nov. 10	Philadelphia	L	7-10
Nov. 16	**AT N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**27-20**
Nov. 23	**MINNESOTA**	**W**	**23-6**
Nov. 27	**AT DETROIT**	**W**	**31-24**
Dec. 7	**CHICAGO**	**W**	**28-21**
Dec. 14	at Denver	L	26-34
Dec. 20	at Chicago (ot)	L	16-22
Dec. 27	Baltimore	L	24-41
Jan. 4	at Minnesota	L	3-16
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 10	at Chicago	L	27-31

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	332.6	15	9
RUSHING	119.8	15	9
PASSING	212.8	17	9
SCORING	23.0	16	7
THIRD DOWN %	48.8	2	2
POINTS/PLAY	0.387	13	7

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	311.8	12	4
RUSHING	117.7	18	6
PASSING	194.1	11	5
SCORING	21.2	11	5
INTERCEPTIONS	7	28	14
SACKS	36	T20	11
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.344	10	5
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+1	T12	7

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JORDAN LOVE	439	291	3,381	23	6
MALIK WILLIS	35	30	422	3	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JOSH JACOBS	234	929	4.0	13
EMANUEL WILSON	125	496	4.0	3
JORDAN LOVE	47	199	4.2	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
ROMEO DOUBS	55	724	13.2	6
JOSH JACOBS	36	282	7.8	1
CHRISTIAN WATSON	35	611	17.5	6
TUCKER KRAFT	32	489	15.3	6
DONTAYVION WICKS	30	332	11.1	2

KICKING: Brandon McManus, 24-30 FGs, 32-33 PATs, 104 points; Lucas Havrisik, 4-4 FGs, 7-9 PATs, 19 points
TACKLES: Quay Walker, 128; Edgerrin Cooper, 118
SACKS: Micah Parsons, 12.5; Rashan Gary, 7.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Evan Williams, 3; Xavier McKinney, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

LON HORWEDEL-IMAGN IMAGES

SILENT NIGHT It had been four decades since the Packers had entered an NFL Draft without a first-round pick. In 1986, they were without one because they'd traded it for a defensive back named Mossy Cade, which turned out to be a horrendously ill-advised move. There were no such regrets for general manager Brian Gutekunst about giving up his 2026 first-round pick — as well as his 2027 first-rounder — in the August trade that brought first-team All-Pro edge rusher **Micah Parsons** over from the Dallas Cowboys. So spending the first night of the draft as a spectator, while odd, was fine with him. "We got better [too]," Gutekunst replied when asked if it was difficult to see other NFC teams get better in Round 1 while his team didn't. "With this particular pick, we got better a whole year earlier."

GREEN BAY SOUTH Head coach Matt LaFleur is calling the Miami Dolphins "Green Bay South" after watching his former defensive coordinator, now-Miami Dolphins head coach Jeff Hafley, and Gutekunst's right-hand personnel man, now-Dolphins GM Jon-Eric Sullivan, add a host of ex-Packers players and staff. "They're taking everybody!" LaFleur joked. This season's Packers-Dolphins matchup will be about both competition and camaraderie. "He'll be outstanding," LaFleur said of Hafley. "He's a guy that I've got a ton of respect for, a ton of love for. [We're] certainly going to miss him, but I'm happy for his opportunity."

IT'S GOTTA BE THE SHOES Quarterback Jordan Love's charitable foundation, "Hands of 10ve," distributes cleats to youth and high-school sports teams in Wisconsin and Love's hometown of Bakersfield, California, for each touchdown pass or run he posts. Last season, he finished with only 23 in regular-season play, leaving him motivated. "I want to get that number up next year, throw even more touchdowns and get even more teams involved," Love said. "But the impact is there. I'm just appreciative of where I'm at now, to be able to do this."

SCOUTING THE PACKERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP GREEN BAY

"Matthew Golden, since the day they drafted him, has been on a fast track of improvement. The guy has great take-off on his routes and is becoming a more sophisticated route-runner. … The Packers already did a new deal for Jayden Reed that made sense. … Jordan Morgan is the next man up at left tackle with Rasheed Walker in Carolina. … Zach Tom quietly is one of the better right tackles. … Thought the investment in center Sean Rhyan was smart, too. … Packers are banking on a productive year from Christian Watson after letting Romeo Doubs leave in free agency to New England. … The backfield is strong. Jordan Love has outstanding touch and torque on his throws. … No one likes playing against running back Josh Jacobs. He can embarrass defenses with his power and speed. … Tyrod Taylor, a post-draft deal, is a really solid backup. And Love has gotten dinged often enough that they needed Taylor. … The defense really needed an injection of size and toughness. They got that inside with Javon Hargrave. … Edgerrin Cooper is one of the faster and better all-around young linebackers. … The comeback is ahead of schedule for Micah Parsons. The Packers are feeling good about his medical progress and how he played after the trade and getting the big contract. … Xavier McKinney has been one of the top safeties in the NFL for years. … We see Chris McClellan making an impact on the defensive line rotation behind Devonte Wyatt right away. … It won't take long for Brandon Cisse to earn playing time in the secondary."

2026 PACKERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Love, Jordan	QB	6-4	219	6	Utah State	D1-20	D1-GB-20
18	McCord, Kyle	QB	6-3	218	1	Syracuse	FA-26	D6a-Phi-25
6	Taylor, Tyrod	QB	6-1	217	15	Virginia Tech	FA-NYJ-26	D6-Bal-11

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30	Brooks, Chris	RB	6-1	219	3	BYU	FA-24	FA-Mia-23
8	Jacobs, Josh	RB	5-10	223	7	Alabama	FA-LV-24	D1b-LV-19
32	Lloyd, MarShawn	RB	5-9	220	2	USC	D3a-24	D3a-GB-24
26	Martinez, Damien	RB	6-0	217	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-25	D7-Sea-25
22	Strong Jr., Pierre	RB	5-11	215	4	South Dakota State	FA-25	D4b-NE-22

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49	Dabney, Drake	TE	6-5	246	1	TCU	FA-25	FA-Ten-25
0	Golden, Matthew	WR	5-11	191	1	Texas	D1-25	D1-GB-25
84	Keeney-James, J.	WR	6-0	190	1	UMass	FA-25	FA-Det-25
85	Kraft, Tucker	TE	6-5	259	3	South Dakota State	D3-23	D3-GB-23
16	Melton, Bo	WR	5-11	189	2	Rutgers	PS-Sea-22	D7-Sea-22
23	Moore, Skyy	WR	5-10	195	4	Western Michigan	FA-SF-26	D2a-KC-22
88	Musgrave, Luke	TE	6-6	253	3	Oregon State	D2a-23	D2a-GB-23
80	Neyor, Isaiah	WR	6-4	218	1	Nebraska	FA-25	FA-SF-25
11	Reed, Jayden	WR	5-11	187	3	Michigan State	D2b-23	D2b-GB-23
82	Sheppard, Will	WR	6-3	196	1	Colorado	FA-25	FA-GB-25
43	Swinson, Messiah	TE	6-7	259	1	Arizona State	FA-26	FA-GB-24
9	Watson, Christian	WR	6-4	208	4	North Dakota State	D2-22	D2-GB-22
81	Whyle, Josh	TE	6-7	248	3	Cincinnati	FA-25	D5-Ten-23
83	Williams, Savion	WR	6-4	222	1	TCU	D3-25	D3-GB-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Banks, Aaron	G	6-5	325	5	Notre Dame	FA-SF-25	D2-SF-21
72	Banks, Brant	T	6-7	306	1	Rice	FA-25	FA-GB-25
61	Barnhart, Karsen	G	6-4	306	1	Michigan	FA-25	FA-LAC-24
71	Belton, Anthony	G/T	6-6	336	1	NC State	D2-25	D2-GB-25
78	Cooper, Dalton	T	6-6	326	1	Oklahoma State	FA-25	FA-KC-25
79	Glover, Travis	T	6-6	317	2	Georgia State	D6-24	D6-GB-24
67	Jennings, Donovan	G/T	6-4	323	1	South Florida	FA-24	FA-GB-24
70	Kinnard, Darian	T/G	6-5	322	3	Kentucky	T-Phi-25	D5-KC-22
62	Monk, Jacob	C/G	6-3	308	2	Duke	D5a-24	D5a-GB-24
77	Morgan, Jordan	T/G	6-5	311	2	Arizona	D1-24	D1-GB-24
75	Rhyan, Sean	C/G	6-5	321	4	UCLA	D3-22	D3-GB-22
68	Smith, Lecitus	G/C	6-3	314	3	Virginia Tech	FA-25	D6-Ari-22
50	Tom, Zach	OL	6-4	304	4	Wake Forest	D4b-22	D4b-GB-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
69	Barnett, Dante	DL	6-1	275	1	Dickinson	FA-25	FA-Cin-25
91	Brinson, Warren	DL	6-5	315	1	Georgia	D6-25	D6-GB-25
94	Brooks, Karl	DL	6-3	296	3	Bowling Green	D6a-23	D6a-GB-23
60	Campbell, Anthony	DT	6-6	307	1	Miami (Fla.)	FA-26	FA-Sea-26
57	Cox Jr., Brenton	DL	6-4	250	3	Florida	FA-23	FA-GB-23
63	Crumedy, Jaden	DT	6-5	305	2	Mississippi State	FA-26	D6-Car-24
96	Ester, James	DL	6-3	289	1	Northern Illinois	FA-24	FA-GB-24
64	Ford, Jonathan	DL	6-5	338	3	Miami (Fla.)	W-Chi-25	D7-GB-22
98	Hargrave, Javon	DL	6-2	307	10	South Carolina St.	FA-Min-26	D3-Pit-16
53	Mosby, Arron	DL	6-3	250	3	Fresno State	W-Car-23	FA-Car-22
45	Oliver, Collin	DL	6-2	240	1	Oklahoma State	D5-25	D5-GB-25
1	Parsons, Micah	DL	6-3	250	5	Penn State	T-Dal-25	D1-Dal-21
97	Riley, Jordon	DL	6-5	338	3	Oregon	PS-NYG-25	D7-NYG-23
99	Sorrell, Barryn	DL	6-3	256	1	Texas	D4-25	D4-GB-25
93	Stackhouse, Nazir	DL	6-4	327	1	Georgia	FA-25	FA-GB-25
90	Van Ness, Lukas	DL	6-5	272	3	Iowa	D1-23	D1-GB-23
95	Wyatt, Devonte	DL	6-3	304	4	Georgia	D1b-22	D1b-GB-22

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Cooper, Edgerrin	LB	6-2	229	2	Texas A&M	D2a-24	D2a-GB-24
44	Franklin, Zaire	LB	6-0	235	8	Syracuse	T-Ind-26	D7-Ind-18
59	Hopper, Ty'Ron	LB	6-2	228	2	Missouri	D3b-24	D3b-GB-24
58	McDuffie, Isaiah	LB	6-1	227	5	Boston College	D6b-21	D6b-GB-21
31	Niemann, Nick	LB	6-3	234	5	Iowa	FA-25	D6-LAC-21
54	Welch, Kristian	LB	6-3	240	6	Iowa	FA-Bal-25	FA-Bal-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37	Baldwin, Johnathan	S	6-0	190	1	UNLV	FA-25	FA-GB-25
34	Bartholomew, Shemar	CB	6-0	200	2	Georgia Southern	FA-25	FA-NYJ-24
7	Bullard, Javon	S	5-10	198	2	Georgia	D2b-24	D2b-GB-24
36	Hadden, Kamal	CB	6-1	192	1	Tennessee	FA-24	D6-KC-24
29	McKinney, Xavier	S	6-0	201	6	Alabama	FA-NYG-24	D2-NYG-20
25	Nixon, Keisean	CB	5-10	200	7	South Carolina	FA-LV-22	FA-LV-19
27	Oladapo, Kitan	S	6-2	216	2	Oregon State	D5b-24	D5b-GB-24
41	Perry, Mark	S	6-0	211	1	TCU	FA-25	FA-Mia-24
38	Simpson, Jaylin	CB	6-0	180	1	Auburn	FA-25	D5-Ind-24
21	St-Juste, Benjamin	CB	6-3	200	4	Minnesota	FA-LAC-26	D3a-Was-21
24	Valentine, Carrington	CB	6-0	189	3	Kentucky	D7a-23	D7a-GB-23
33	Williams, Evan	S	5-11	200	2	Oregon	D4-24	D4-GB-24

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35	Havrisik, Lucas	K	6-2	185	2	Arizona	FA-25	FA-Ind-22
42	Orzech, Matt	LS	6-3	245	6	Azusa Pacific	FA-LAR-23	FA-Bal-19
19	Whelan, Daniel	P	6-5	216	3	UC Davis	FA-23	FA-NO-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	9	Christian Watson	83	Savion Williams
WR	11	Jayden Reed	16	Bo Melton
WR	0	Matthew Golden	82	Will Sheppard
LT	77	Jordan Morgan	79	Travis Glover
LG	65	Aaron Banks	67	Donovan Jennings
C	75	Sean Rhyan	62	Jacob Monk
RG	71	Anthony Belton	52	Jager Burton (R)
RT	50	Zach Tom	70	Darian Kinnard
TE	85	Tucker Kraft	88	Luke Musgrave
QB	10	Jordan Love	6	Tyrod Taylor
RB	8	Josh Jacobs	30	Chris Brooks

DEFENSE

DT	95	Devonte Wyatt	91	Warren Brinson
DT	98	Javon Hargrave	93	Nazir Stackhouse
DT	94	Karl Brooks	55	Chris McClellan (R)
EDGE	1	Micah Parsons	57	Brenton Cox Jr.
ILB	44	Zaire Franklin	58	Isaiah McDuffie
ILB	56	Edgerrin Cooper	59	Ty'Ron Hopper
EDGE	90	Lukas Van Ness	99	Barryn Sorrell
CB	24	Carrington Valentine	21	Benjamin St-Juste
CB	25	Keisean Nixon	2	Brandon Cisse (R)
SS	33	Evan Williams	7	Javon Bullard
FS	29	Xavier McKinney	27	Kitan Oladapo

SPECIALISTS

K	28	Trey Smack (R)	KR	23	Skyy Moore
P	19	Daniel Whelan	PR	23	Skyy Moore

2, 5 The Packers allowed 350 or more total yards twice in 14 games before Micah Parsons was injured and five times in five games afterward.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	Brandon Cisse	CB	5-11	189	South Carolina
3	Chris McClellan	DT	6-3	313	Missouri
4	Dani Dennis-Sutton	DE	6-5	256	Penn State
5	Jager Burton	C/G	6-4	312	Kentucky
6	Domani Jackson	CB	6-0	194	Alabama
6	Trey Smack	K	6-1	188	Florida

Tied for the smallest class in franchise history, the six-player group checked off every need box on general manager Brian Gutekunst's pre-draft to-do list except for a tight end. He traded up twice, for defensive tackle Chris McClellan and placekicker Trey Smack, while lucking into defensive end Dani Dennis-Sutton after trying to trade up into the third round to get him, only to see him fall into the Packers' lap at No. 120. Getting Brandon Cisse and Domani Jackson to fortify the cornerback group was critical. Center/guard Jager Burton may end up being the steal of the class.

VIKINGS

NFC EAST FORECAST

4

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**GREEN BAY**	**4:25**
SEPT. 20	AT CHICAGO	1:00
SEPT. 27	AT TAMPA BAY	4:05
OCT. 4	**MIAMI**	**4:05**
OCT. 11	AT NEW ORLEANS	1:00
OCT. 18	BYE	
OCT. 25	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	AT DETROIT	1:00
NOV. 9	**BUFFALO**	**8:15**
NOV. 15	AT GREEN BAY	1:00
NOV. 22	**SAN FRANCISCO** (MEXICO CITY)	**8:20**
NOV. 29	**ATLANTA**	**1:00**
DEC. 6	**CAROLINA**	**4:25**
DEC. 10	AT NEW ENGLAND	8:15
DEC. 20	**DETROIT**	**8:20**
TBD	**WASHINGTON**	
JAN. 3	AT N.Y. JETS	1:00
TBD	**CHICAGO**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	8
2022 NFC PLAYOFFS	13
2023	7
2024 NFC PLAYOFFS	14
2025	9

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **KEVIN O'CONNELL**
Record With Team: **43-25**
Career Record: **43-25**
Offensive Coordinator: **WES PHILLIPS**
Defensive Coordinator: **BRIAN FLORES**
Special Teams Coordinator: **MATT DANIELS**
Offensive Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: **JOSH McCOWN**
Running Game Coordinator/Running Backs: **CURTIS MODKINS**
Wide Receivers: **KEENAN McCARDELL**
Tight Ends/Game Management: **RYAN CORDELL**
Offensive Line: **KEITH CARTER**
Defensive Running Game Coordinator: **RYAN NIELSEN**
Outside Linebackers: **THAD BOGARDUS**
Inside Linebackers/Senior Defensive Assistant: **MIKE SIRAVO**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **GERALD ALEXANDER**
Safeties: **MICHAEL HUTCHINGS**

Kevin O'Connell is banking on resurrecting Kyler Murray's career — à la Sam Darnold in 2024 — and reaping the benefits that have come the Vikings' way anytime O'Connell has had consistency and durability at quarterback.

"When we have that standard at quarterback," said O'Connell, "we win a lot of games."

In two seasons with Kirk Cousins and Darnold playing every game at a high level, O'Connell went 27-7 with two playoff appearances and one NFL Coach of the Year award with Darnold in 2024. Outside of those, the Vikings are 16-18 with no playoff appearances, including an ill-fated 2025 campaign with J.J. McCarthy as the starting quarterback.

Murray seems an unlikely savior. He posted a 38-49-1 record, including 0-1 in the playoffs, in seven up-and-down seasons with an Arizona Cardinals team that drafted him No. 1 overall, gave up on him before his 29th birthday and is now paying him $35.5 million NOT to play for it this season.

The Vikings gave Murray the league minimum, $1.3 million, on a one-year prove-it deal. Scoff at O'Connell's high aspirations at your own risk while remembering that before Darnold won 14 games in Minnesota in 2024 and a Super Bowl in Seattle last season, he was 21-35 as a starter and labeled a failed former first-round pick.

OFFENSE

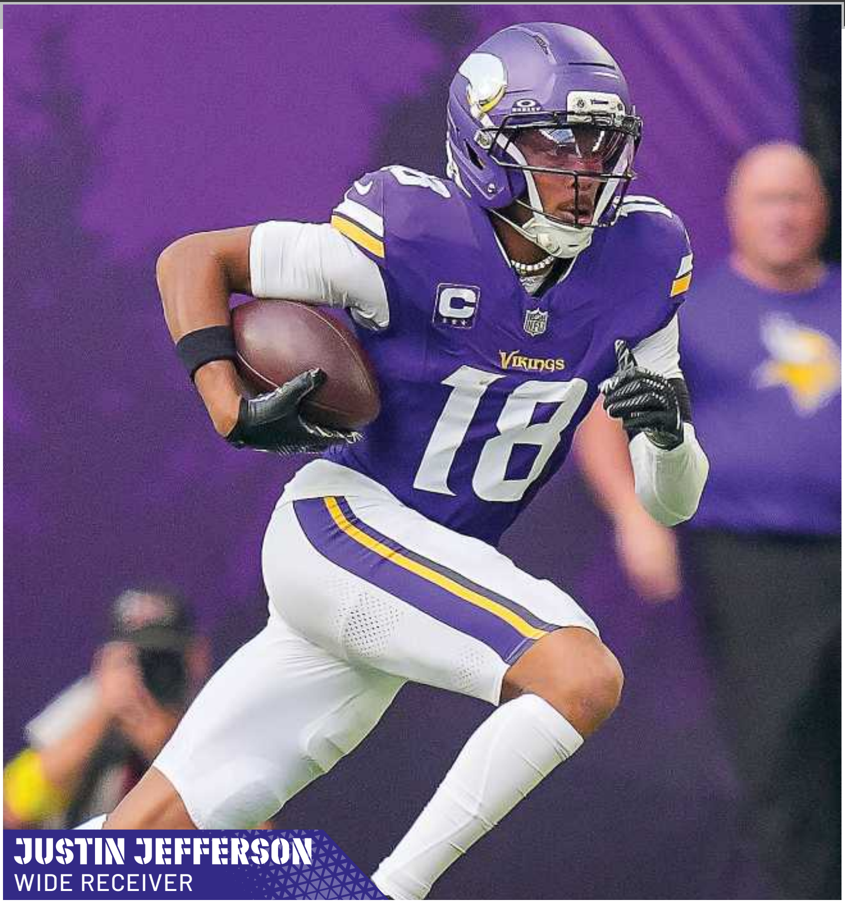
O'Connell's offenses typically thrive with quarterbacks playing under center and in the pocket in a structured play-action system. Murray, coming off a foot injury that limited him to five games last season, prefers shotgun and is most dangerous extending plays with his helter-skelter scrambling ability. O'Connell is intrigued by the off-script potential but also loves Murray's career completion percentage (67.1) and 121:60 touchdown-to-interception ratio.

McCarthy, whose career will be paused for a year unless Murray has a meltdown, turned the ball over 14 times in 10 games last year. "We're 35-4 when we break even or better on the turnover margin," O'Connell said. "So we need to build our team a certain way at quarterback."

The Vikings have arguably the league's best No. 1 receiver in Justin Jefferson and one of its best No. 2s in Jordan Addison. Jefferson, coming off the least productive season of his Hall of Fame-bound career because of terrible quarterback play, hasn't complained one iota but has called Murray "the spark" the offense needs. The Vikings made a smart, necessary signing after the draft, acquiring physical 6-foot-3 veteran Jauan Jennings to be their No. 3 receiver.

The offensive line has a new coach, Keith Carter, who's expected to bring cohesion to a unit that often looked lost against creative four-man rushes. Left tackle Christian Darrisaw is a concern. He's good but should be great. He spent all of 2025 overprotecting a 2024 knee injury, missing seven games and pulling himself early in five of the 10 games he played. The Vikings signed Ryan Van Demark, a better swing tackle, in free agency and drafted a left tackle, Caleb Tiernan, in the third round. Blake Brandel, a former guard/tackle forced to play center for the first time in his life last year, will return to that position, where he is OK at best.

Tight end T.J. Hockenson's stock is falling. He was forced to take a pay cut after an unproductive season and will be gone at year's end if he doesn't mesh with Murray. The running backs aren't stellar, but 31-year-old Aaron Jones Sr.



BRAD REMPEL-IMAGN IMAGES

can still make an impact as an elite pass-catcher. Jordan Mason, good but not as impactful as advertised when he came over from the San Francisco 49ers, is a bigger, younger back but isn't a playmaker. Rookie sixth-round pick Demond Claiborne is a guy to keep an eye on as a shifty little back with 4.37 speed.

DEFENSE

Creative defensive coordinator Brian Flores blitzes more frequently than anyone else in the league. Flores uses a 3-4 base defense but has several sub-packages and multiple fronts he uses to keep quarterbacks confused. He'll transition this year from safety Harrison Smith, who is expected to officially retire, and edge rusher Jonathan Greenard, who forced the Vikings to trade him to the Philadelphia Eagles for two third-round picks after the Vikings refused to give him a raise from $19 million per year.

Dallas Turner, who cost the Vikings multiple picks when they traded up in the first round to get him in 2024, led the team in sacks a year ago and is ready to replace Greenard after building NFL-caliber strength the past two years. Smith will be tougher to replace. Jay Ward, who blossomed in Flores' three-safety looks at the end of last year, enters his fourth year in the system.

The Vikings also used the draft to select four elite defenders who can help Flores right away. One of them is third-round safety Jakobe Thomas, a physical, instinctive player with versatile traits similar to Joshua Metellus, a team leader and the ultimate rags-to-riches Flores guy. Caleb Banks, a top-10 talent who fell to 18 because of a twice-broken foot, is a 6-foot-6, 327-pounder with size to stonewall the run and speed and quickness to be a rare three-down, double-digit sack guy from the inside. He could start alongside third-round pick Domonique Orange — "Big Citrus" — who's 6-foot-2 and 322 pounds. Orange will at the very least be part of a deep rotation of players in their early to mid-20s. Tackle Jalen Redmond, a 27-year-old rising star whose career began in the UFL, has inside rushing skills that made him one of the best players on a defense that last year ranked third in total defense, fourth in third-down defense and seventh in scoring defense. Second-round pick Jake Golday possesses a skill set that is similar to that of outside linebacker Andrew Van Ginkel, one of the league's more versatile rush and cover edge weapons. Golday will be groomed to spell Van Ginkel and back up inside 'backers Blake Cashman and Eric Wilson.

At cornerback, Byron Murphy Jr. is an elite player who is in his prime. He also can shift inside to the nickel. Isaiah Rodgers, who had a decent 2025 that included a two-touchdown game against the Bengals, returns on the other side. The Vikings also added James Pierre, mostly a backup in his first six years with the Pittsburgh Steelers, and fifth-round pick Charles Demmings, who turned heads at the NFL Scouting Combine.

SPECIALISTS

Will Reichard is only 25, but the reigning first-team All-Pro heads into his third season as the league's best placekicker. He's never missed a PAT, and he nailed 11-of-13 field goals from 50-plus yards last season, including a franchise-record 62-yarder. Veteran punter Johnny Hekker, 36, can be trusted to replace Ryan Wright, who parlayed his best season into more money with the New Orleans Saints. Hekker is a four-time first-team All-Pro who hasn't missed a game in his 14 seasons. Myles Price, a shifty little receiver built like a running back, led the team in punt and kickoff returns as an undrafted rookie. He had eight long returns, including a touchdown, nullified by penalties. He also struggled with ball security and will be challenged this year by the speedy Claiborne.

FINAL ANALYSIS

O'Connell's tutelage and Murray's desperation could combine to resurrect another quarterback's downtrodden career. The question is whether O'Connell needs to post his first playoff win in his fifth season as Vikings head coach to stay off the hot seat. In January, ownership already fired Kwesi Adofo-Mensah, the general manager it hired a month before O'Connell in 2022, so patience is wearing thin.

2025 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 8	**AT CHICAGO**	**W**	**27-24**
Sept. 14	Atlanta	L	6-22
Sept. 21	**CINCINNATI**	**W**	**48-10**
Sept. 28	at Pittsburgh	L	21-24
Oct. 5	**AT CLEVELAND**	**W**	**21-17**
Oct. 19	Philadelphia	L	22-28
Oct. 23	at L.A. Chargers	L	10-37
Nov. 2	**AT DETROIT**	**W**	**27-24**
Nov. 9	Baltimore	L	19-27
Nov. 16	Chicago	L	17-19
Nov. 23	at Green Bay	L	6-23
Nov. 30	at Seattle	L	0-26
Dec. 7	**WASHINGTON**	**W**	**31-0**
Dec. 14	**AT DALLAS**	**W**	**34-26**
Dec. 21	**AT N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**16-13**
Dec. 25	**DETROIT**	**W**	**23-10**
Jan. 4	**GREEN BAY**	**W**	**16-3**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	275.0	28	16
RUSHING	108.3	23	13
PASSING	166.7	29	16
SCORING	20.2	26	14
THIRD DOWN %	31.8	32	16
POINTS/PLAY	0.361	19	9

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	282.6	3	1
RUSHING	124.1	21	9
PASSING	158.5	2	1
SCORING	19.6	7	3
INTERCEPTIONS	8	T25	T12
SACKS	49	T4	T2
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.325	6	3
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-9	T29	T14

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
J.J. McCARTHY	243	140	1,632	11	12
CARSON WENTZ	169	110	1,216	6	5
MAX BROSMER	71	47	328	0	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
JORDAN MASON	159	758	4.8	6
AARON JONES SR.	132	548	4.2	2
J.J. MCCARTHY	37	181	4.9	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
JUSTIN JEFFERSON	84	1,048	12.5	2
T.J. HOCKENSON	51	438	8.6	3
JORDAN ADDISON	42	610	14.5	3
JALEN NAILOR	29	444	15.3	4
AARON JONES SR.	28	199	7.1	1

KICKING: Will Reichard, 33-35 FGs, 31-31 PATs, 130 points; **TACKLES:** Blake Cashman, 144; Eric Wilson, 115 **SACKS:** Dallas Turner, 8.0; Andrew Van Ginkel, 7.0 **INTERCEPTIONS:** 3 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

FROM FAN TO QB **Kyler Murray** grew up in the Dallas area but hated the Cowboys and loved the Vikings. “I was seven years old,” he said. “Genuine, genuine fandom that ran deep. A lot of purple in my household.” His youth football team was named the Vikings. He was 12 when he celebrated the highs of Brett Favre and the 2009 Vikings, only to suffer, like all Vikings fans, the pain of falling short. “I cried real tears,” Murray said of that team’s loss to the New Orleans Saints in the NFC Championship Game. “Never in a million years did I think this was going to come around full circle.”

ANIMAL PLANET First-round pick Caleb Banks is bringing more than a massive frame and top-10 talent to Minnesota. He has some interesting roommates coming with him. “I love animals,” he said. “Different animals.” Banks is bringing a Cane Corso mastiff, two pythons and a chameleon, and he thinks he’ll be adding a tarantula and some exotic frogs as well. “Yeah, I’m different,” he said. “You’d be surprised.”

FOLLOW THE BOUNCING PICK How did the Vikings end up with Wake Forest running back Demond Claiborne? Simple — sort of. They used the 198th overall pick. The pick originally belonged to the Vikings. They traded it to Houston for running back Cam Akers in 2024. Houston traded it back to the Vikings in 2025. The Vikings sent it to San Francisco for running back Jordan Mason. The 49ers sent it to New England. And, finally, the Patriots sent it back to Minnesota when the Vikings traded up to get Claiborne.

FASHION FORAY Justin Jefferson’s style runs deeper than The Griddy. He has gotten close with Anna Wintour, which might not mean much to football fans, but to fashion fans, it’s a big deal considering that Wintour is global editorial director for *Vogue*. According to the *Minnesota Star Tribune*, Wintour’s nephews are big fans of Jefferson. Jefferson has walked in Vogue World 2024 and made his debut at the Met Gala, fashion’s biggest event of the year, in 2025.

SCOUTING THE VIKINGS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MINNESOTA

“Kyler Murray lacks size, obviously, but his rhythm passing and mobility are huge pluses. He should be able to resurrect his career in Minnesota. … Justin Jefferson does things others simply can’t do. … Jordan Addison really needs to grow up, fast. There have been way too many off-field issues with him. … Signing Will Fries to that big contract looks like one of their smarter moves. … Murray could probably use another wide receiver. Should the Vikings look at Stefon Diggs now that his court case was dismissed? … They absolutely nailed the Donovan Jackson pick. … Christian Darrisaw is integral to the offense. When he’s out there at left tackle, things run smoothly. … Aaron Jones Sr. has made it work with the Vikings on his contracts every year. He remains a really productive, pile-moving back. … Caleb Banks got cleared on our medical board. He’s had some issues with the foot, but we felt like it was behind him. When he’s healthy, the guy can flat-out play. … Domonique ‘Big Citrus’ Orange — great nickname, really good player. Quad injury is behind him now. … Eric Wilson is a really small linebacker, but he’s good at finding the football and a sound tackler. … Blake Cashman is a really athletic linebacker. … Byron Murphy Jr. is one of the better nickels in the game. … Can’t help but look at their depth chart and wonder if they have enough talent in the secondary overall. … Isaiah Rodgers is a smaller corner who can really run with these faster receivers. … General manager is in flux, but Kevin O’Connell is on terra firma. Don’t sense he’s on any real hot seat.”

KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 VIKINGS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12	Brosmer, Max	QB	6-2	218	1	Minnesota	FA-25	FA-Min-25
9	McCarthy, J.J.	QB	6-3	219	2	Michigan	D1a-24	D1a-Min-24
1	Murray, Kyler	QB	5-10	207	7	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-26	D1-Ari-19
11	Wentz, Carson	QB	6-5	237	10	North Dakota State	FA-25	D1-Phi-16

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33	Jones Sr., Aaron	RB	5-10	208	9	UTEP	FA-GB-24	D5b-GB-17
27	Mason, Jordan	RB	5-11	230	4	Georgia Tech	T-SF-25	FA-SF-22
36	Scott, Zavier	RB	6-1	221	2	Maine	FA-24	FA-Ind-23

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Addison, Jordan	WR	5-11	179	3	USC	D1-23	D1-Min-23
86	Bartholomew, Gavin	TE	6-5	249	1	Pitt	D6b-25	D6b-Min-25
81	Davis, Joaquin	WR	6-4	195	1	NC Central	FA-25	FA-Den-25
13	Felton, Tai	WR	6-1	186	1	Maryland	D3-25	D3-Min-25
19	Fleming, Dontae	WR	6-2	180	1	Tulane	FA-25	FA-Min-25
87	Hockenson, T.J.	TE	6-5	248	7	Iowa	T-Det-22	D1-Det-19
14	Jennings, Jauan	WR	6-3	212	6	Tennessee	FA-SF-26	D7-SF-20
18	Jefferson, Justin	WR	6-1	195	6	LSU	D1a-20	D1a-Min-20
82	Jones, Jeshaun	WR	6-1	188	1	Maryland	FA-24	FA-Min-24
83	Nesbit, Bryson	TE	6-5	228	1	North Carolina	FA-25	FA-Min-25
84	Oliver, Josh	TE	6-5	264	7	San José State	FA-Bal-23	D3-Jac-19
4	Price, Myles	WR	5-9	183	1	Indiana	FA-25	FA-Min-25
85	Yurosek, Ben	TE	6-4	251	1	Georgia	FA-25	FA-Min-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
64	Brandel, Blake	G	6-6	315	5	Oregon State	D6a-20	D6a-Min-20
68	Byrd, Henry	G	6-5	314	2	Princeton	FA-23	FA-Min-23
71	Darrisaw, Christian	T	6-5	315	5	Virginia Tech	D1-21	D1-Min-21
79	Etienne, Caleb	T	6-7	329	1	BYU	FA-25	FA-Cin-25
76	Fries, Will	G	6-6	321	5	Penn State	FA-Ind-25	D7-Ind-21
60	Huber, Joe	G	6-5	310	1	Wisconsin	FA-25	FA-Min-25
74	Jackson, Donovan	G	6-4	324	1	Ohio State	D1-25	D1-Min-25
65	Jurgens, Michael	C	6-5	311	2	Wake Forest	D7a-24	D7a-Min-24
66	Lee, Vershon	G	6-4	318	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Min-25
75	O'Neill, Brian	T	6-7	310	8	Pitt	D2-18	D2-Min-18
73	Rouse, Walter	T	6-6	330	2	Oklahoma	D6a-24	D6a-Min-24
72	Van Demark, Ryan	T	6-6	307	3	UConn	FA-Buf-26	FA-Ind-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90	Ingram-Dawkins, Tyrion	DL	6-5	290	1	Georgia	D5-25	D5-Min-25
93	Johnson II, Eric	DT	6-4	320	4	Missouri State	FA-Ind-26	D5-Ind-22
61	Redmond, Jalen	DL	6-3	305	2	Oklahoma	FA-24	FA-Car-23
50	Rodriguez, Levi Drake	DL	6-2	307	2	TAMU-Commerce	D7b-24	D7b-Min-24
94	Taimani, Taki	DL	6-1	324	2	Oregon	FA-24	FA-Min-24
99	Williams, Elijah	DL	6-3	298	1	Morgan State	FA-25	FA-Min-25

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
92	Batty, Tyler	OLB	6-6	271	1	BYU	FA-25	FA-Min-25
51	Cashman, Blake	LB	6-1	235	7	Minnesota	FA-Hou-24	D5-NYJ-19
32	Chambliss, Chaz	OLB	6-1	244	1	Georgia	FA-25	FA-Min-25
0	Pace Jr., Ivan	LB	5-10	236	3	Cincinnati	FA-23	FA-Min-23
98	Richter, Bo	OLB	6-1	248	2	Air Force	FA-24	FA-Min-24
52	Ross, Josh	LB	6-0	229	4	Michigan	FA-25	FA-Bal-22
15	Turner, Dallas	OLB	6-3	247	2	Alabama	D1b-24	D1b-Min-24
43	Van Ginkel, Andrew	OLB	6-4	242	7	Wisconsin	FA-Mia-24	D5-Mia-19
55	Wilson, Eric	LB	6-1	231	9	Cincinnati	FA-GB-25	FA-Min-17

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Hailassie, Kahlef	S	6-1	195	2	WKU	FA-25	FA-KC-23
26	Jackson, Theo	S	6-1	205	4	Tennessee	FA-22	D6-Ten-22
6	McGlothern Jr., Dwight	CB	6-2	185	2	Arkansas	FA-24	FA-Min-24
44	Metellus, Joshua	S	5-11	208	6	Michigan	D6b-20	D6b-Min-20
7	Murphy Jr., Byron	CB	5-11	190	7	Washington	FA-Ari-23	D2a-Ari-19
23	Pierre, James	CB	6-2	185	6	Florida Atlantic	FA-Pit-26	FA-Pit-20
2	Rodgers, Isaiah	CB	5-10	180	5	UMass	FA-Phi-25	D6-Ind-20
37	Thomas, Tavierre	S	5-10	212	8	Ferris State	FA-TB-25	FA-Ari-18
34	Vaughn, Zemaiah	CB	6-3	180	1	Utah	FA-25	FA-Min-25
24	Ward, Jay	S	6-1	190	3	LSU	D4-23	D4-Min-23

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42	DePaola, Andrew	LS	6-1	227	11	Rutgers	FA-20	FA-TB-12
5	Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	225	14	Oregon State	FA-Ten-26	FA-LAR-12
16	Reichard, Will	K	6-1	190	2	Alabama	D6b-24	D6b-Min-24

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	18	Justin Jefferson	82	Jeshaun Jones
WR	3	Jordan Addison	19	Dontae Fleming
WR	14	Jauan Jennings	13	Tai Felton
LT	71	Christian Darrisaw	78	Caleb Tiernan (R)
LG	74	Donovan Jackson	68	Henry Byrd
C	64	Blake Brandel	58	Gavin Gerhardt (R)
RG	76	Will Fries	60	Joe Huber
RT	75	Brian O'Neill	72	Ryan Van Demark
TE	87	T.J. Hockenson	84	Josh Oliver
QB	1	Kyler Murray	9	J.J. McCarthy
RB	33	Aaron Jones Sr.	27	Jordan Mason

DEFENSE

DE	95	Caleb Banks (R)	90	Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins
NT	97	Domonique Orange (R)	50	Levi Drake Rodriguez
DT	61	Jalen Redmond	94	Taki Taimani
OLB	43	Andrew Van Ginkel	41	Jake Golday (R)
ILB	55	Eric Wilson	0	Ivan Pace Jr.
ILB	51	Blake Cashman	52	Josh Ross
OLB	15	Dallas Turner	98	Bo Richter
CB	2	Isaiah Rodgers	23	James Pierre
CB	7	Byron Murphy Jr.	6	Dwight McGlothern Jr.
SS	44	Joshua Metellus	8	Jakobe Thomas (R)
FS	24	Jay Ward	26	Theo Jackson

SPECIALISTS

K	16	Will Reichard	KR	21	Demond Claiborne (R)
P	5	Johnny Hekker	PR	4	Myles Price

46.3% Minnesota blitzed on a league-high 46.3% of opposing dropbacks, 10.9 percentage points higher than the second-place Falcons.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Caleb Banks	DL	6-6	327	Florida
2	Jake Golday	LB	6-4	240	Cincinnati
3	Domonique Orange	NT	6-2	322	Iowa State
3	Caleb Tiernan	OT	6-7	323	Northwestern
3	Jakobe Thomas	S	6-1	211	Miami (Fla.)
5	Max Bredeson	FB	6-2	252	Michigan
5	Charles Demmings	CB	6-1	193	Stephen F. Austin
6	Demond Claiborne	RB	5-10	188	Wake Forest
7	Gavin Gerhardt	C	6-4	310	Cincinnati

Four of interim general manager Rob Brzezinski's five top-100 picks are defenders who can play immediately, while his Day 3 picks produced the only fullback (Max Bredeson) on the roster and a running back (Demond Claiborne) whose 4.37 speed will push Myles Price at kick returner on Day 1. Caleb Banks, a top-10 talent whose foot injuries dropped him to No. 18 overall, will start immediately and could dominate, if healthy. Domonique Orange's run-stuffing build gives him an edge over Levi Drake Rodriguez in the nose tackle competition. Jake Golday's rare versatility will enable him to rotate with outside linebacker Andrew Van Ginkel and back up Blake Cashman and Eric Wilson inside. Caleb Tiernan is a future swing tackle. Jakobe Thomas can play right away in Minnesota's three-safety schemes. Charles Demmings is a small-school guy with big-time athleticism. Gavin Gerhardt should push aside Michael Jurgens for the backup center job.

FALCONS

NFC SOUTH
FORECAST
3

A lot has changed for the Atlanta Falcons during the 2026 offseason. After eight consecutive losing seasons, a new regime is in place. The team parted ways with head coach Raheem Morris and general manager Terry Fontenot, bringing in former Cleveland Browns head coach Kevin Stefanski and first-time general manager Ian Cunningham to try to right the ship.

Additionally, former franchise quarterback and 2016 NFL MVP Matt Ryan has come aboard as the Falcons' first-ever president of football — a role created specifically for him to help guide the organization back toward the success it experienced during his playing days.

Factor in a likely quarterback battle this summer and some off-field concerns involving a 2025 first-round pick, and there's no shortage of storylines in Atlanta. Falcons fans are simply hoping this new direction finally pulls the franchise out of nearly a decade of mediocrity.

OFFENSE

The 2025 season was supposed to mark the beginning of the Michael Penix Jr. era. With weapons like running back Bijan Robinson, wide receiver Drake London and tight end Kyle Pitts Sr., the Falcons had the young talent in place to support their quarterback.

Instead, the team stumbled to a 3-7 start, highlighted by an embarrassing 30-0 loss to the division rival Carolina Panthers and two overtime defeats through Week 11. That same week, Penix suffered a partially torn ACL and was placed on injured reserve. Atlanta managed to win five of its final seven games, but the early damage proved too much to overcome.

This offseason brought major offensive changes. One of the most notable moves was signing former Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa as insurance while Penix recovers. Because both quarterbacks are left-handed, the offensive structure remains consistent regardless of who starts.

The deal is also team-friendly, with Tagovailoa still owed $52.7 million by Miami, leaving Atlanta responsible for only a one-year veteran minimum. If Penix isn't ready for Week 1, the Falcons hope that a change of scenery will help Tagovailoa regain his form after a 2025 season that included 20 touchdowns and 15 interceptions.

Fortunately, Atlanta still boasts one of the league's premier young playmakers in Robinson. He led the NFL in yards from scrimmage (2,298) in 2025, earning first-team All-Pro honors. He also hauled in four touchdowns while becoming only the second running back in NFL history to record at least 1,400 rushing yards and 800 receiving yards in the same season (Steven Jackson, St. Louis Rams, 2006 season).

Tyler Allgeier's departure to the Arizona Cardinals leaves a void in the backfield, but Brian Robinson Jr. is expected to step into that complementary role. While he brings a different style, the Falcons will look to maintain their physical presence in the run game.

In the passing game, London remains the clear No. 1 option after posting 68 catches for 919 yards and seven touchdowns in only 12 games last season. Pitts also enters 2026 with renewed momentum following a bounce-back year that saw him record 88 receptions and 928 yards. While consistency has been an issue throughout his career, the talent has never been in question.

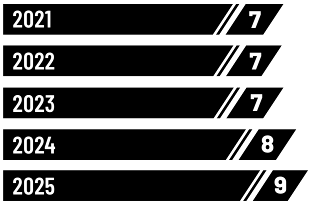
The biggest concern on offense may be the offensive line. Right tackle Kaleb

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT PITTSBURGH	1:00
SEPT. 20	**CAROLINA**	**1:00**
SEPT. 24	AT GREEN BAY	8:15
OCT. 5	AT NEW ORLEANS	8:15
OCT. 11	**BALTIMORE**	**8:20**
OCT. 18	**CHICAGO**	**1:00**
OCT. 25	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**1:00**
NOV. 1	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
NOV. 8	**CINCINNATI (MADRID)**	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 15	**KANSAS CITY**	**1:00**
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 29	AT MINNESOTA	1:00
DEC. 6	**DETROIT**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
DEC. 20	AT WASHINGTON	1:00
TBD	**TAMPA BAY**	
JAN. 3	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
TBD	AT CAROLINA	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE STAFF

Head Coach: **KEVIN STEFANSKI**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **45-56**
Offensive Coordinator: **TOMMY REES**
Defensive Coordinator: **JEFF ULBRICH**
Special Teams Coordinator: **CRAIG AUKERMAN**
Quarterbacks: **ALEX VAN PELT**
Running Backs: **MICHAEL PITRE**
Wide Receivers: **ROBERT PRINCE**
Tight Ends: **KEVIN KOGER**
Passing Game Coordinator: **TANNER ENGSTRAND**
Offensive Line: **BILL CALLAHAN**
Defensive Line: **NATE OLLIE**
Inside Linebackers: **BARRETT RUUD**
Outside Linebackers: **JOHN TIMU**
Secondary: **JUSTIN HOOD**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator: **PATRICK TONEY**

BIJAN ROBINSON
RUNNING BACK

DARREN YAMASHITA-IMAGN IMAGES

McGary's unexpected retirement forced the Falcons to act quickly, signing veteran Jawaan Taylor. With a left-handed quarterback, Taylor will now be responsible for protecting the blindside — making his performance critical to the unit's overall success.

DEFENSE

The Falcons didn't just overhaul the offense this offseason — the defense also saw significant change. However, one of the most important decisions the new regime made was retaining defensive coordinator Jeff Ulbrich. Ulbrich has played a major role in the defense's recent improvement, including a franchise-record 57 sacks in 2025, which ranked second in the NFL. The unit also climbed to 15th in total defense and 19th in scoring defense — signs of real progress after years of struggles on that side of the ball.

That said, the Falcons will need to overcome several key departures. Cornerback Dee Alford, linebacker Kaden Elliss and defensive tackles David Onyemata and Ruke Orhorhoro leave noticeable gaps.

To address those losses, Atlanta added outside linebackers Samson Ebukam and Azeez Ojulari, middle linebacker Christian Harris, defensive end Cameron Thomas and free safety Sydney Brown. The team also acquired defensive tackle Maason Smith via trade, giving them a physical presence in the interior at 6-foot-5, 306 pounds.

The biggest storyline, however, involves 2025 first-round pick James Pearce Jr. He was arrested this offseason and is facing multiple felony charges. While the situation is ongoing, early indications suggest he could face a suspension but still play at some point in 2026.

Pearce set a franchise rookie record with 10.5 sacks last season, making his availability a major factor in the Falcons' defensive outlook. In his absence — or if his role is reduced — the team will rely heavily on fellow 2025 first-rounder Jalon Walker, whose versatility enables him to impact the game both as an off-the-ball linebacker and edge pass-rusher.

SPECIALISTS

Atlanta's special teams unit underwent a complete reset after a disappointing 2025 season. The team hired Craig Aukerman as coordinator and Chase Blackburn as assistant in an effort to stabilize the group.

After years of reliability at kicker, first with Matt Bryant and later Younghoe Koo, the position became a problem. Koo's struggles led to his release early in the season, forcing the Falcons to cycle through multiple options. This offseason, the team brought in veteran Nick Folk, one of the most accurate kickers in the league over the past three seasons, to provide stability. At punter, Jake Bailey replaces Bradley Pinion. Bailey, a former All-Pro, offers upside if he can return to his earlier form.

The return game remains unsettled, though rookie Zachariah Branch has the talent to claim the role long-term. Deven Thompkins could handle duties early as Branch adjusts to the NFL.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Falcons enter 2026 relying heavily on young talent and a new coaching staff to push them back into contention in the NFC South — a division they haven't won since the 2016 season.

There's no shortage of intrigue, but the biggest question remains at quarterback. As John Madden famously said, "If you have two quarterbacks, you have none." That sentiment applies directly to Atlanta.

Penix's recovery timeline is uncertain, and Tagovailoa's inconsistency raises questions about his long-term reliability. While the Falcons have exciting playmakers across the roster, everything hinges on stability under center.

If that position falters, it could result in another disappointing season.

2025 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 7	Tampa Bay	L	20-23
Sept. 14	**AT MINNESOTA**	**W**	**22-6**
Sept. 21	at Carolina	L	0-30
Sept. 28	**WASHINGTON**	**W**	**34-27**
Oct. 13	**BUFFALO**	**W**	**24-14**
Oct. 19	at San Francisco	L	10-20
Oct. 26	Miami	L	10-34
Nov. 2	at New England	L	23-24
Nov. 9	at Indianapolis (ot)	L	25-31
Nov. 16	Carolina (ot)	L	27-30
Nov. 23	**AT NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**24-10**
Nov. 30	at N.Y. Jets	L	24-27
Dec. 7	Seattle	L	9-37
Dec. 11	**AT TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**29-28**
Dec. 21	**AT ARIZONA**	**W**	**26-19**
Dec. 29	**L.A. RAMS**	**W**	**27-24**
Jan. 4	**NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**19-17**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	333.0	14	8
RUSHING	125.8	8	5
PASSING	207.2	19	10
SCORING	20.8	24	13
THIRD DOWN %	33.3	30	15
POINTS/PLAY	0.337	24	13

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	326.6	15	6
RUSHING	126.2	24	12
PASSING	200.4	13	6
SCORING	23.6	19	9
INTERCEPTIONS	16	T6	T3
SACKS	57	2	1
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.381	T18	T8
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+5	8	5

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
MICHAEL PENIX JR.	276	166	1,982	9	3
KIRK COUSINS	269	166	1,721	10	5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
BIJAN ROBINSON	287	1,478	5.1	7
TYLER ALLGEIER	143	514	3.6	8

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
KYLE PITTS SR.	88	928	10.5	5
BIJAN ROBINSON	79	820	10.4	4
DRAKE LONDON	68	919	13.5	7
DARNELL MOONEY	32	443	13.8	1
DAVID SILLS V	18	191	10.6	2

KICKING: Zane Gonzalez, 19-22 FGs, 17-18 PATs, 74 points; John Parker Romo, 11-14 FGs, 12-13 PATs, 44 points; Younghoe Koo, 2-3 FGs, 2-2 PATs, 8 points

TACKLES: Kaden Elliss, 107; Jessie Bates III, 98

SACKS: James Pearce Jr., 10.5; Brandon Dorlus, 8.5

INTERCEPTIONS: Xavier Watts, 5; 2 players tied with 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BUSY BIJAN Bijan Robinson deserves a very long and successful NFL career, but whenever he decides to hang up the cleats, Robinson has some other job opportunities in store. Robinson has been keeping busy this offseason, serving as a brand ambassador, traveling the world and even DJing at this year's NFL Honors. Also, Bijan previously filmed a cameo on the Netflix show "Outer Banks."

BROTHERLY LOVE With their first selection in the 2026 NFL Draft, the Falcons selected cornerback **Avieon Terrell** out of Clemson. Avieon joins his older brother A.J., making them the first brothers to play in the same NFL secondary since Devin and Jason McCourty on the New England Patriots from 2018-20.

NEW UNIFORMS, NEW FALCONS? The Falcons are looking for any way to get the train back on the tracks, as they revealed their new uniforms this offseason. The new set features red home jerseys and white away jerseys with red numbers. Thankfully, the Falcons' red helmet-throwback uniforms will remain in the rotation.

WELCOME BACK, MATTY ICE The Falcons haven't been good since Matt Ryan was their quarterback. As president of football, Ryan will now look to make the Falcons a quality team again, but this time from the management side.

DAWGS IN ATLANTA After decades of keeping the University of Georgia at arm's length, the Atlanta Falcons have finally embraced the local pipeline. From 1966 to 2024, Atlanta drafted just 12 Bulldogs — none in the first two rounds. That changed last year with linebacker Jalon Walker at No. 15 overall, and they continue to add former Bulldogs, selecting wide receiver Zachariah Branch in the third round (No. 79 overall) in the 2026 NFL Draft.

AUSTIN HOOPER RETURNS Veteran tight end Austin Hooper is back with the Falcons, where he spent four seasons (2016-19) as one of Ryan's most reliable targets and earned two Pro Bowl selections. He'll also return to his familiar No. 81, giving fans a reason to dust off those old Hooper jerseys.

SCOUTING THE FALCONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ATLANTA

"Ian Cunningham got high marks as a scout and executive with the Chicago Bears, Philadelphia Eagles and Baltimore Ravens. He's a former University of Virginia offensive tackle who has the scouting acumen it takes to do the job and the office experience. … Drake London keeps growing each year as a player. … Can't say I'm a believer in Michael Penix Jr. or Tua Tagovailoa. I do expect Tua to win the starting job, but they'll use both guys this season. … They're already working on a big deal for Bijan Robinson, and deservedly so. He's awesome. … Zachariah Branch's arrest for walking on a sidewalk was silly. It didn't tank his draft stock, though. … A fresh start for Jawaan Taylor should help his game. … Few guards are as nasty as Chris Lindstrom. … Mr. Reliable: Falcons left tackle Jake Matthews. … Hard to see the NFL not suspending James Pearce Jr., even though he's gotten a favorable legal outcome on very serious charges. … Christian Harris has always had the speed and talent, but durability issues cost him his starting job with the Texans. … Defensive line should get better with Da'Shawn Hand, Samson Ebukam additions. … Divine Deablo is where the game is going at linebacker. Get speed on the field; don't worry about less-than-ideal size. … Jessie Bates III remains one of the better all-around safeties. … Cool story: drafting Avieon Terrell to join his big brother A.J. Terrell Jr. in the Falcons' secondary. Even cooler: Both are really great football players."

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 FALCONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9	Penix Jr., Michael	QB	6-3	220	2	Washington	D1-24	D1-Atl-24
13	Siemian, Trevor	QB	6-3	220	9	Northwestern	FA-26	D7a-Den-15
1	Tagovailoa, Tua	QB	6-1	225	6	Alabama	FA-Mia-26	D1a-Mia-20

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38	Carter, Nathan	RB	5-10	202	1	Michigan State	FA-25	FA-Atl-25
25	Goodson, Tyler	RB	5-9	197	3	Iowa	FA-Ind-26	FA-GB-22
7	Robinson, Bijan	RB	5-11	215	3	Texas	D1-23	D1-Atl-23
15	Robinson Jr., Brian	RB	6-1	225	4	Alabama	FA-SF-26	D3-Was-22
26	Washington Jr., Carlos	RB	5-11	210	1	SE Louisiana	FA-23	FA-Atl-23

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19	Blair, Chris	WR	6-2	215	2	Alcorn State	FA-23	FA-GB-21
4	Dotson, Jahan	WR	5-11	184	4	Penn State	FA-Phi-26	D1-Was-22
80	Drummond, Dylan	WR	6-0	190	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-24	FA-Det-23
81	Hooper, Austin	TE	6-4	254	10	Stanford	FA-NE-26	D3-Atl-16
5	London, Drake	WR	6-4	215	4	USC	D1-22	D1-Atl-22
8	Pitts Sr., Kyle	TE	6-6	250	5	Florida	D1-21	D1-Atl-21
47	Simon, Joshua	TE	6-4	240	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Atl-25
83	Thompkins, Deven	WR	5-8	155	3	Utah State	FA-24	FA-TB-22
82	Washington, Casey	WR	6-0	205	2	Illinois	D6b-24	D6b-Atl-24
89	Woerner, Charlie	TE	6-5	250	6	Georgia	FA-SF-24	D6-SF-20
14	Zaccheaus, Olamide	WR	5-8	199	4	Virginia	FA-Chi-26	FA-Atl-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Bergeron, Matthew	OL	6-5	315	3	Syracuse	D2-23	D2-Atl-23
68	Hinton, Kyle	OL	6-2	315	3	Washburn	FA-25	D7-Min-20
72	Jerrell, Michael	OL	6-5	309	2	Findlay	T-Sea-25	D6c-Sea-24
62	Levin, Corey	C/G	6-4	307	7	Chattanooga	FA-Ten-26	FA-Ten-17
63	Lindstrom, Chris	G	6-4	310	7	Boston College	D1a-19	D1a-Atl-19
70	Matthews, Jake	T	6-5	310	12	Texas A&M	D1-14	D1-Atl-14
69	Nelson, Jack	OL	6-7	314	1	Wisconsin	D7-25	D7-Atl-25
64	Neuzil, Ryan	OL	6-3	305	4	Appalachian State	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
77	Norton, Storm	OL	6-7	310	6	Toledo	FA-24	FA-Det-17
73	Robinson, Layden	G	6-3	311	2	Texas A&M	FA-26	D4-NE-24
74	Stueber, Andrew	OL	6-7	320	1	Michigan	FA-25	D7-NE-22
71	Taylor, Jawaan	T	6-5	330	7	Florida	FA-KC-26	D2-Jac-19
67	Walton, Brandon	OL	6-5	300	3	Florida Atlantic	FA-26	FA-Buf-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95	Blacklock, Ross	DT	6-5	307	4	TCU	FA-26	D2-Hou-20
54	Dorlus, Brandon	DL	6-3	295	2	Oregon	D4-24	D4-Atl-24
91	Garcia, Elijah	DL	6-5	302	2	Rice	FA-25	FA-LAR-22
90	Hand, Da'Shawn	DL	6-3	302	8	Alabama	FA-LAC-26	D4-Det-18
96	Harrison, Zach	DL	6-5	270	3	Ohio State	D3-23	D3-Atl-23
94	London, LaCale	DL	6-3	297	2	Western Illinois	FA-23	FA-Chi-20
92	Smith, Maason	DT	6-5	306	2	LSU	T-Jac-26	D2-Jac-24
95	Stille, Ben	DL	6-4	296	3	Nebraska	FA-25	FA-Mia-22
91	Williams, Chris	DL	6-2	298	4	Wagner	FA-Chi-26	FA-Ind-20

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44	Andersen, Troy	ILB	6-4	245	4	Montana State	D2b-22	D2b-Atl-22
40	Bertrand, JD	ILB	6-1	230	2	Notre Dame	D5-24	D5-Atl-24
0	Deablo, Divine	ILB	6-3	223	5	Virginia Tech	FA-LV-25	D3b-LV-21
52	Ebukam, Samson	OLB	6-3	245	9	Eastern Washington	FA-Ind-26	D4b-LAR-17
45	Harris, Christian	ILB	6-2	232	4	Alabama	FA-Hou-26	D3-Hou-22
50	Malone, DeAngelo	ILB	6-3	235	4	WKU	D3b-22	D3b-Atl-22
51	Ojulari, Azeez	OLB	6-3	240	5	Georgia	FA-Phi-26	D2-NYG-21
27	Pearce Jr., James	OLB	6-5	243	1	Tennessee	D1b-25	D1b-Atl-25
99	Thomas, Cameron	OLB	6-4	265	4	San Diego State	FA-Cle-26	D3-Ari-22
55	Tindall, Channing	LB	6-2	236	4	Georgia	FA-Ari-26	D3-Mia-22
48	Trice, Bralen	OLB	6-4	274	2	Washington	D3-24	D3-Atl-24
43	Verdon, Malik	ILB	6-4	218	1	Iowa State	FA-25	FA-Atl-25
11	Walker, Jalon	OLB	6-2	245	1	Georgia	D1a-25	D1a-Atl-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Bates III, Jessie	S	6-1	210	8	Wake Forest	FA-Cin-23	D2-Cin-18
33	Bowman Jr., Billy	CB	5-10	194	1	Oklahoma	D4-25	D4-Atl-25
35	Brooks, Natrone	CB	5-11	175	2	Southern Miss	FA-23	FA-Atl-23
29	Brown, Sydney	S	5-10	211	3	Illinois	T-Phi-26	D3b-Phi-23
37	Bryant, Cobee	CB	6-0	180	1	Kansas	FA-25	FA-Atl-25
28	Ford Jr., Mike	CB	6-0	199	8	SE Missouri State	FA-Cle-25	FA-Det-18
41	Hall, Darren	CB	6-0	195	4	San Diego State	FA-Ari-26	D4-Atl-21
23	Hellams, DeMarcco	S	6-1	203	2	Alabama	D7a-23	D7a-Atl-23
39	Henderson, C.J.	CB	6-1	205	5	Florida	FA-25	D1-Jac-20
30	Holmes, Darnay	CB	5-9	198	6	UCLA	FA-LV-26	D4-NYG-20
21	Hughes, Mike	CB	5-10	190	8	UCF	FA-Det-23	D1-Min-18
22	Phillips III, Clark	CB	5-9	185	3	Utah	D4-23	D4-Atl-23
34	Robinson, Jammie	S	5-11	195	2	Florida State	FA-25	D5-Car-23
24	Terrell Jr., A.J.	CB	6-1	200	6	Clemson	D1-20	D1-Atl-20
31	Watts, Xavier	S	6-0	203	1	Notre Dame	D3-25	D3-Atl-25
20	Woods, A.J.	CB	5-11	195	1	Pitt	FA-25	FA-Was-24

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Bailey, Jake	P	6-2	212	7	Stanford	FA-Mia-26	D5b-NE-19
6	Folk, Nick	K	6-1	225	18	Arizona	FA-NYJ-26	D6-Dal-07
49	McCullough, Liam	LS	6-2	245	4	Ohio State	FA-22	FA-LV-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Drake London	83	Devin Thompkins
WR	4	Jahan Dotson	82	Casey Washington
WR	14	Olamide Zaccheaus	17	Zachariah Branch (R)
LT	70	Jake Matthews	69	Jack Nelson
LG	65	Matthew Bergeron	68	Kyle Hinton
C	64	Ryan Neuzil	62	Corey Levin
RG	63	Chris Lindstrom	75	Ethan Onianwa (R)
RT	71	Jawaan Taylor	77	Storm Norton
TE	8	Kyle Pitts Sr.	81	Austin Hooper
QB	9	Michael Penix Jr.	1	Tua Tagovailoa
RB	7	Bijan Robinson	15	Brian Robinson Jr.

DEFENSE

DE	96	Zach Harrison	90	Da'Shawn Hand
DT	92	Maason Smith	94	LaCale London
DE	54	Brandon Dorlus	91	Chris Williams
OLB	27	James Pearce Jr.	52	Samson Ebukam
ILB	45	Christian Harris	53	Kendal Daniels (R)
ILB	0	Divine Deablo	44	Troy Andersen
OLB	11	Jalon Walker	51	Azeez Ojulari
CB	24	A.J. Terrell Jr.	22	Clark Phillips III
CB	21	Mike Hughes	12	Avieon Terrell (R)
SS	3	Jessie Bates III	23	DeMarcco Hellams
FS	31	Xavier Watts	29	Sydney Brown

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Nick Folk	KR	17	Zachariah Branch (R)
P	16	Jake Bailey	PR	17	Zachariah Branch (R)

257

Bijan Robinson led the NFL in yards after catch over expected at 257, 57 more yards than second-place George Pickens.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	Avieon Terrell	CB	5-11	180	Clemson
3	Zachariah Branch	WR	5-10	180	Georgia
4	Kendal Daniels	LB	6-5	242	Oklahoma
6	Anterio Thompson	DT	6-4	310	Washington
6	Harold Perkins Jr.	LB	6-0	223	LSU
7	Ethan Onianwa	OT	6-7	331	Ohio State

Considering that the Falcons didn't have a first-round pick in 2026 after trading up for James Pearce Jr. in 2025, they still came away with a solid draft under the new regime. Avieon Terrell fills an immediate need at cornerback alongside brother A.J. and should see early snaps, while Zachariah Branch adds versatility as a playmaker on screens, quick hitters and in the return game. Additionally, both Kendal Daniels and Harold Perkins Jr. bring intriguing upside — they're raw but athletic prospects who could develop into key contributors within Atlanta's evolving linebacker group.

PANTHERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
2

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	**CHICAGO**	**1:00**
SEPT. 20	AT ATLANTA	1:00
SEPT. 27	AT CLEVELAND	1:00
OCT. 4	**DETROIT**	**8:20**
OCT. 11	BYE	
OCT. 18	AT PHILADELPHIA	1:00
OCT. 25	**TAMPA BAY**	**1:00**
OCT. 29	AT GREEN BAY	8:15
NOV. 8	**DENVER**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	AT NEW ORLEANS	1:00
NOV. 22	**BALTIMORE**	**1:00**
NOV. 30	AT TAMPA BAY	8:15
DEC. 6	AT MINNESOTA	4:25
DEC. 13	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
DEC. 20	**CINCINNATI**	**1:00**
TBD	AT PITTSBURGH	
JAN. 3	**SEATTLE**	**1:00**
TBD	**ATLANTA**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	5
2022	7
2023	2
2024	5
2025 NFC PLAYOFFS	8

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **DAVE CANALES**
Record With Team: **13-21**
Career Record: **13-21**
Offensive Coordinator: **BRAD IDZIK**
Defensive Coordinator: **EJIRO EVERO**
Special Teams Coordinator: **TRACY SMITH**
Quarterbacks: **WILL HARRIGER**
Running Backs: **BERNIE PARMALEE**
Wide Receivers: **ROB MOORE**
Tight Ends: **PAT MCPHERSON**
Offensive Line: **JOE GILBERT**
Assistant Head Coach/Run Game Coordinator: **HAROLD GOODWIN**
Defensive Line: **TODD WASH**
Linebackers: **PETER HANSEN**
Outside Linebackers: **AC CARTER**
Secondary: **RENALDO HILL**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator: **JONATHAN COOLEY**
Senior Defensive Assistant: **DOM CAPERS**

For a team that had a losing record last season, the Carolina Panthers have a lot of optimism in 2026 around what they are building in Charlotte — and deservedly so.

Despite going a modest 8-9 in 2025, the Panthers eked into the playoffs for the first time since the 2017 season by winning the NFC South. They then acquitted themselves well in a last-second, 34-31 home loss to the Los Angeles Rams in the wild-card round. Now the Panthers appear to have gotten better, owing to a strong free-agency class, a solid 2026 draft and the emergence of Bryce Young as a viable NFL QB and Tetairoa McMillan as an excellent No. 1 wide receiver.

The season won't be without its challenges. Starting left tackle Ikem Ekwonu ruptured the patellar tendon in his right knee in that January playoff game, and the recovery timeline for that injury means he will likely miss Week 1 of the season and perhaps a good bit more than that. The Panthers must figure out his replacement in training camp.

Carolina also has lost 1,000-yard rusher Rico Dowdle, who was one of the surprise stories of 2025 and was rewarded with a big free-agent contract with Pittsburgh. But most of the Panthers' key players return on both sides of the ball, as do head coach Dave Canales and general manager Dan Morgan. This is a season when Carolina can realistically hope not only to make the playoffs again, but also to do more damage once they get there.

OFFENSE

Young enters his fourth season with a new dose of confidence after leading Carolina to the playoffs for the first time in his career and playing well in his brief postseason. Young has picked up the nickname "Carolina Reaper," owing to his frequent display of the ability to play his best in the game's fourth quarter. The QB has grown more adept at using his mobility to get out of trouble.

Young set numerous career highs but still averaged under 200 yards per game throwing the ball in 2025, and the Panthers would like to see that number rise. He has a new backup in former Pittsburgh Steeler Kenny Pickett, with the Panthers trading away veteran Andy Dalton in an effort to get younger and more mobile at the QB2 spot.

Young's primary target is McMillan, the NFL's Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2025 with 1,014 receiving yards and seven touchdowns. Young normally looks first to McMillan on big third downs, but by the end of 2025 he was looking almost as often at Jalen Coker.

Coker is far from a burner, but he has shown a tenacious ability to make the tough catch, and he led the Panthers in receiving in their playoff game with 134 yards and a touchdown.

Coker has surpassed Xavier Legette as the Panthers' No. 2 option. Legette, the team's first-round draft choice in 2024, has mostly been a disappointment. His production and on-field awareness have both left something to be desired. But the Panthers remain hopeful he can be a contributor.

None of those top three receivers is someone who can regularly take the top off defenses, which is why Carolina drafted Chris Brazzell II in the third round. He's 6-foot-4 and runs a 4.37 40, which will at the least give other receivers more room underneath.

The running back position will be manned by Chuba Hubbard, who is reliable but not really a breakaway threat and will no longer have Dowdle by his side.

BRYCE YOUNG
QUARTERBACK

ROBERT DEUTSCH-IMAGN IMAGES

Expect Trevor Etienne to become the No. 2 back. Jonathon Brooks is an X-factor — the 2024 second-round pick been hurt almost his entire NFL career, but he could provide some chunk plays if he ever stays healthy.

The offensive line's biggest question is the aforementioned Ekwonu's health, as the team waits to see how quickly he rehabs from that serious knee injury. In the meantime, left tackle will be manned by rookie first-round draft pick Monroe Freeling or veteran Rasheed Walker. Expect Walker to get the nod early, although the Panthers believe Freeling can be a multi-year starter. Guards Robert Hunt and Damien Lewis and right tackle Taylor Moton are all solid starters and road graders. The center likely will be free-agent signee Luke Fortner.

Tight end will again be mediocre and again feature a committee, as the Panthers hope that Tommy Tremble and Ja'Tavion Sanders together can cobble together a decent season. Carolina hasn't solved the production problem at this position since Greg Olsen left the field.

DEFENSE

Carolina's biggest problem in 2025 was getting to the quarterback with any consistency. The Panthers' 30 total sacks as a defense tied for third-worst in the NFL. The Panthers have tried to solve that with one of the NFL's biggest free-agent acquisitions, as edge rusher Jaelan Phillips joins the team on a four-year, $120 million contract. Carolina also hopes that Nic Scourton and Princely Umanmielen improve in getting to the QB in their second season. Scourton, in particular, has shown a lot of flashes early in his career and might have a breakout year.

Carolina's best defensive lineman remains Derrick Brown, who helps anchor the 3-4 alignment and can throw blockers around. Nose tackle Bobby Brown III will be spelled by rookie Lee Hunter, whose bulk will prove helpful.

Inside linebacker Devin Lloyd might be a game-changing free-agent acquisition at a position where the Panthers have struggled. Lloyd had five interceptions for Jacksonville last season. He will join Trevin Wallace on the inside.

Carolina's strength on D is the defensive backfield. Cornerbacks Jaycee Horn and Mike Jackson were among the best tandems in the NFL last season and combined for nine of the Panthers' 15 interceptions. Strong safety Tre'von Moehrig is solid against the run. Free safety Nick Scott sometimes is susceptible to the deep ball but is valuable because of his craftiness. Lathan Ransom could challenge Scott for a starting job and at the least will play in the "big nickel" package.

SPECIALISTS

Carolina is stable here. Placekicker Ryan Fitzgerald has developed a reputation for coming through in the clutch. Sam Martin is a veteran and reliable punter. Etienne will handle most of the return duties, as the Panthers try to get him more touches. Long-snapper JJ Jansen, the longest-tenured player in Panthers history, returns for his 18th season.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Panthers benefit from playing in one of the NFL's weaker divisions, and they will have a real chance to win the NFC South once more. On defense, Carolina needs to prove it can disrupt opposing QBs more often. On offense, the left tackle question needs an answer, and Young needs to take a step forward in the first three quarters of games — he's already good in the fourth. Coker has the potential to become a 1,000-yard receiver, and that would help take some of the pressure off McMillan. This is a potential playoff team once again and one that has more depth than it did a year ago.

2025 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 7	at Jacksonville	L	10-26
Sept. 14	at Arizona	L	22-27
Sept. 21	**ATLANTA**	**W**	**30-0**
Sept. 28	at New England	L	13-42
Oct. 5	**MIAMI**	**W**	**27-24**
Oct. 12	**DALLAS**	**W**	**30-27**
Oct. 19	**AT N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**13-6**
Oct. 26	Buffalo	L	9-40
Nov. 2	**AT GREEN BAY**	**W**	**16-13**
Nov. 9	New Orleans	L	7-17
Nov. 16	**AT ATLANTA (OT)**	**W**	**30-27**
Nov. 24	at San Francisco	L	9-20
Nov. 30	**L.A. RAMS**	**W**	**31-28**
Dec. 14	at New Orleans	L	17-20
Dec. 21	**TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**23-20**
Dec. 28	Seattle	L	10-27
Jan. 3	at Tampa Bay	L	14-16
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 10	L.A. Rams	L	31-34

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	295.6	27	15
RUSHING	116.3	19	11
PASSING	179.3	26	15
SCORING	18.3	27	15
THIRD DOWN %	36.1	25	14
POINTS/PLAY	0.318	27	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	327.2	16	7
RUSHING	123.3	20	8
PASSING	203.9	15	7
SCORING	22.4	15	7
INTERCEPTIONS	15	T8	5
SACKS	30	T28	T14
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.381	T18	T8
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-2	T15	T8

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
BRYCE YOUNG	478	304	3,011	23	11
ANDY DALTON	37	25	293	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
RICO DOWDLE	236	1,076	4.6	6
CHUBA HUBBARD	134	511	3.8	1
BRYCE YOUNG	54	216	4.0	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
TETAIROA McMILLAN	70	1,014	14.5	7
RICO DOWDLE	39	297	7.6	1
XAVIER LEGETTE	35	363	10.4	3
JALEN COKER	33	394	11.9	3
CHUBA HUBBARD	30	223	7.4	3

KICKING: Ryan Fitzgerald, 24-29 FGs, 27-30 PATs, 99 points; **TACKLES:** Christian Rozeboom, 122; Nick Scott, 111; **SACKS:** Derrick Brown, 5.0; Nic Scourton, 5.0 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Jaycee Horn, 5; Mike Jackson, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

KUECHLY'S MOMENT On Aug. 6, 2026, the Panthers will play in the Hall of Fame exhibition game this season for the first time since 1995, when they played in the game during their expansion year. This time, the Panthers were invited to participate in large part because of former Panthers linebacker Luke Kuechly, who will be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Aug. 8. Kuechly earned election into the hall on his second attempt.

HOOKED ON A FREELING **Monroe Freeling**, the Panthers' first-round draft pick in April, is a 315-pound offensive tackle out of Georgia who wears his heart on his sleeve. When the Panthers' braintrust called Freeling after picking him No. 19 overall in April, Freeling signed off the call with head coach Dave Canales by saying: "Love you!" The moment, captured on video, quickly went viral.

"THE FRIDGE" ARRIVES Rookie defensive lineman Lee Hunter, Carolina's second-round pick out of Texas Tech, is nicknamed "The Fridge." The 318-pounder hopes it catches on in the Carolinas, too, since he fully embraces the moniker. The name first came from his high school defensive coordinator, who said he was going to call him Hunter "Fridge." Why? "If people want to eat, they got to get through you," Hunter remembered his old coach saying. "So I took that and ran with it."

DISRUPTION INTO PRODUCTION The Panthers' biggest splash in free agency came when they signed edge rusher Jaelan Phillips to a four-year, $120 million contract ($80 million guaranteed). They did so hoping the 2021 first-rounder would help the pass rush considerably; last year, no Panther had more than five sacks. Phillips has never had more than 8.5 sacks in an NFL season but believes he can do so this year. "I do want to get those sack numbers up," Phillips says. "I've always known that I can be a 10-plus, 13-plus sack guy."

SCOUTING THE PANTHERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CAROLINA

"Bryce Young has gotten to a point where the Panthers are ready to discuss a long-term contract extension. He has overcome a lack of size and a rough start to his NFL career to establish himself really well over the past year. The arrow is pointed up. ... Tetairoa McMillan simply wins his matchups almost every time. He's a difficult cover. … Adding Chris Brazzell II should complement Xavier Leggette and Jalen Coker. … Ikem Ekwonu hasn't lived up to his draft billing, but he's solid overall. … Having Robert Hunt gives the Panthers a moose at right guard. Taylor Moton is still getting the job done at right tackle. … They'll likely miss Rico Dowdle in the backfield, but Chuba Hubbard is solid. … Derrick Brown is rarely blocked by one man. If he gets blocked, he doesn't stay blocked long. … Nic Scourton has come a long way over the past year. … The investment in linebacker is an expensive one, but Jaelan Phillips and Devin Lloyd give this defense true playmakers. … As a run-stopping defensive tackle, Lee Hunter was one of the top interior prospects in the NFL Draft. As a pass-rusher, don't expect big production from him. … Panthers general manager Dan Morgan brings a lot of knowledge to his job from his playing days as a hard-hitting linebacker. … There isn't a ton of talent in the secondary, but the Panthers can feel good about Jaycee Horn."

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 PANTHERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Grier, Will	QB	6-1	212	5	West Virginia	FA-26	D3-Car-19
12	Pickett, Kenny	QB	6-3	220	4	Pitt	FA-LV-26	D1-Pit-22
9	Young, Bryce	QB	5-10	204	3	Alabama	D1-23	D1-Car-23

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Brooks, Jonathon	RB	6-0	207	2	Texas	D2-24	D2-Car-24
28	Dillon, AJ	RB	6-0	247	6	Boston College	FA-Phi-26	D2-GB-20
23	Etienne, Trevor	RB	5-9	198	1	Georgia	D4a-25	D4a-Car-25
30	Hubbard, Chuba	RB	6-1	210	5	Oklahoma State	D4-21	D4-Car-21
37	Johnson Jr., Montrell	RB	5-11	217	1	Florida	FA-25	FA-Phi-25
34	Tyus III, Anthony	RB	6-1	226	1	Ohio	FA-25	FA-Det-25

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
88	Chisena, Dan	WR	6-3	203	5	Penn State	FA-25	FA-Min-20
18	Coker, Jalen	WR	6-3	213	2	Holy Cross	FA-24	FA-Car-24
84	Evans, Mitchell	TE	6-5	258	1	Notre Dame	D5b-25	D5b-Car-25
81	Franks, Feleipe	TE	6-6	241	4	Arkansas	FA-Atl-26	FA-Atl-21
15	Horn Jr., Jimmy	WR	5-8	174	1	Colorado	D6-25	D6-Car-25
17	Legette, Xavier	WR	6-3	227	2	South Carolina	D1-24	D1-Car-24
4	McMillan, Tetairoa	WR	6-4	219	1	Arizona	D1-25	D1-Car-25
13	Metchie III, John	WR	6-0	195	3	Alabama	FA-NYJ-26	D2b-Hou-22
85	Mitchell, James	TE	6-4	252	3	Virginia Tech	FA-24	D5-Det-22
83	Moore, David	WR	6-0	220	7	East Central (Okla.)	FA-TB-24	D7-Sea-17
45	Pierre, Bryce	TE	6-5	255	1	UCLA	FA-25	FA-Car-25
86	Reed, Ja'seem	WR	6-2	195	1	San Diego	FA-25	FA-Car-25
0	Sanders, Ja'Tavion	TE	6-4	243	2	Texas	D4-24	D4-Car-24
80	Smith, Ainias	WR	5-9	176	2	Texas A&M	FA-25	D5a-Phi-24
87	Tremayne, Brycen	WR	6-4	212	2	Stanford	FA-25	FA-Was-23
82	Tremble, Tommy	TE	6-4	250	5	Notre Dame	D3b-21	D3b-Car-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65	Carter, Ja'Tyre	G	6-3	311	3	Southern	FA-24	D7-Chi-22
78	Charles, Saahdiq	G	6-4	328	4	LSU	FA-25	D4-Was-20
79	Ekwonu, Ikem	T	6-4	320	4	NC State	D1-22	D1-Car-22
73	Forsythe, Stone	OL	6-8	314	5	Florida	FA-LV-26	D6-Sea-21
77	Fortner, Luke	OL	6-4	307	4	Kentucky	FA-NO-26	D3-Jac-22
67	Gray, Joshua	OL	6-5	299	1	Oregon State	FA-26	FA-Atl-25
50	Hunt, Robert	G	6-6	335	6	Louisiana	FA-Mia-24	D2a-Mia-20
68	Lewis, Damien	G	6-2	327	6	LSU	FA-Sea-24	D3-Sea-20
72	Moton, Taylor	T	6-5	325	9	Western Michigan	D2b-17	D2b-Car-17
60	Samac, Nick	C	6-4	314	2	Michigan State	PS-Bal-25	D7-Bal-24
63	Walker, Rasheed	T	6-6	324	4	Penn State	FA-GB-26	D7c-GB-22
62	Zavala, Chandler	G	6-5	325	3	NC State	D4-23	D4-Car-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97	Brown III, Bobby	DT	6-4	328	5	Texas A&M	FA-LAR-25	D4a-LAR-21
95	Brown, Derrick	DT	6-5	320	5	Auburn	D1-20	D1-Car-20
94	Harrison-Hunte, Jared	DE	6-4	294	1	SMU	FA-25	FA-Car-25
99	Jackson, Cam	DT	6-6	328	1	Florida	D5a-25	D5a-Car-25
93	Ray, LaBryan	DE	6-4	290	3	Alabama	FA-23	FA-NE-22
98	Wharton, Tershawn	DT	6-1	280	6	Missouri S&T	FA-KC-25	FA-KC-20

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Bartlett, Jared	LB	6-2	237	1	Cincinnati	FA-26	FA-NYJ-25
53	Cherelus, Claudin	LB	6-2	230	3	Alcorn State	W-NYJ-23	FA-NYJ-23
52	Gipson, Trevis	OLB	6-4	263	5	Tulsa	PS-SF-25	D5-Chi-20
39	Hampton, Nick	OLB	6-3	251	3	Appalachian State	FA-LAR-26	D5a-LAR-23
48	Incoom, Thomas	OLB	6-4	265	3	Central Michigan	FA-24	FA-Den-23
91	Jones II, Patrick	OLB	6-4	264	5	Pitt	FA-Min-25	D3d-Min-21
55	Lloyd, Devin	LB	6-3	235	4	Utah	FA-Jac-26	D1b-Jac-22
54	Martin-Scott, Bam	LB	6-2	231	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-Car-25
49	Muhammad, Jamil	OLB	6-1	260	1	USC	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
58	Mwansa, Maz	LB	6-3	223	1	None	FA-25	FA-Car-25
40	Njongmeta, Maema	LB	6-0	232	2	Wisconsin	PS-Cin-25	FA-Cin-24
5	Phillips, Jaelan	OLB	6-5	263	5	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Phi-26	D1b-Mia-21
11	Scourton, Nic	OLB	6-3	257	1	Texas A&M	D2-25	D2-Car-25
27	Simmons, Isaiah	LB	6-4	238	6	Clemson	FA-25	D1-Ari-20
3	Umanmielen, Princely	OLB	6-4	244	1	Ole Miss	D3-25	D3-Car-25
32	Wallace, Trevin	LB	6-1	237	2	Kentucky	D3-24	D3-Car-24

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
29	Evans, Akayleb	CB	6-2	198	4	Missouri	W-Min-24	D4-Min-22
20	Funderburk, Tyrek	CB	6-0	185	2	Appalachian State	FA-26	FA-TB-24
8	Horn, Jaycee	CB	6-1	200	5	South Carolina	D1-21	D1-Car-21
2	Jackson, Mike	CB	6-1	212	4	Miami (Fla.)	T-Sea-24	D5-Dal-19
7	Moehrig, Tre'von	S	6-2	202	5	TCU	FA-LV-25	D2-LV-21
22	Ransom, Lathan	S	6-0	206	1	Ohio State	D4b-25	D4b-Car-25
35	Reid, Michael	CB	6-2	203	1	South Dakota	FA-26	FA-Car-25
36	Richardson, Demani	S	6-1	215	2	Texas A&M	FA-24	FA-Car-24
33	Rochell, Robert	CB	6-0	195	5	Central Arkansas	PS-Dal-25	D4-LAR-21
21	Scott, Nick	S	5-11	201	7	Penn State	FA-25	D7a-LAR-19
26	Smith-Wade, Chau	CB	5-11	176	2	Washington State	D5-24	D5-Car-24
31	Thornton, Corey	CB	6-1	195	1	Louisville	FA-25	FA-Car-25

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Fitzgerald, Ryan	K	5-11	193	1	Florida State	FA-25	FA-Car-25
44	Jansen, JJ	LS	6-2	235	17	Notre Dame	T-GB-09	FA-GB-08
6	Martin, Sam	P	6-1	211	13	Appalachian State	FA-Buf-25	D5-Det-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Xavier Legette	13	John Metchie III
WR	4	Tetairoa McMillan	19	Chris Brazzell II (R)
WR	18	Jalen Coker	15	Jimmy Horn Jr.
LT	79	Ikem Ekwonu	57	Monroe Freeling (R)
LG	68	Damien Lewis	78	Saahdiq Charles
C	77	Luke Fortner	75	Sam Hecht (R)
RG	50	Robert Hunt	62	Chandler Zavala
RT	72	Taylor Moton	63	Rasheed Walker
TE	82	Tommy Tremble	0	Ja'Tavion Sanders
QB	9	Bryce Young	12	Kenny Pickett
RB	30	Chuba Hubbard	23	Trevor Etienne

DEFENSE

DE	98	Tershawn Wharton	93	LaBryan Ray
NT	97	Bobby Brown III	92	Lee Hunter (R)
DE	95	Derrick Brown	94	Jared Harrison-Hunte
EDGE	11	Nic Scourton	91	Patrick Jones II
ILB	32	Trevin Wallace	54	Bam Martin-Scott
ILB	55	Devin Lloyd	53	Claudin Cherelus
EDGE	5	Jaelan Phillips	3	Princely Umanmielen
CB	2	Mike Jackson	26	Chau Smith-Wade
CB	8	Jaycee Horn	29	Akayleb Evans
SS	7	Tre'von Moehrig	38	Zakee Wheatley (R)
FS	21	Nick Scott	22	Lathan Ransom

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Ryan Fitzgerald	KR	23	Trevor Etienne
P	6	Sam Martin	PR	23	Trevor Etienne

26.2%

Carolina's defense pressured the opposing quarterback on a league-low 26.2% of their dropbacks.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Monroe Freeling	OT	6-7	315	Georgia
2	Lee Hunter	DL	6-3	318	Texas Tech
3	Chris Brazzell II	WR	6-4	198	Tennessee
4	Will Lee III	CB	6-1	189	Texas A&M
5	Sam Hecht	C	6-4	303	Kansas State
5	Zakee Wheatley	S	6-3	203	Penn State
7	Jackson Kuwatch	LB	6-4	232	Miami (Ohio)

Monroe Freeling will compete for a starting job right away on an offensive line that is starting to get a little old. If Ikem Ekwonu's rehab slows, Freeling could even be the Day 1 starter at left tackle. Lee Hunter, nicknamed "Fridge," will be part of the defensive rotation immediately. Chris Brazzell II hopes to be the angular speedster the Panthers have lacked for a long time — he was one of head coach Dave Canales' favorite players in the draft. Sam Hecht might actually start at center, if he can beat out veteran Luke Fortner. Will Lee III, Zakee Wheatley and Jackson Kuwatch will all need to make their mark on special teams initially.

SAINTS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

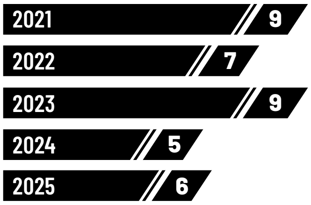
4

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT DETROIT	1:00
SEPT. 20	AT BALTIMORE	1:00
SEPT. 27	**LAS VEGAS**	**4:25**
OCT. 5	**ATLANTA**	**8:15**
OCT. 11	**MINNESOTA**	**1:00**
OCT. 18	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
OCT. 25	**PITTSBURGH (PARIS)**	**9:30 A.M.**
NOV. 1	BYE	
NOV. 8	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
NOV. 15	**CAROLINA**	**1:00**
NOV. 22	AT CHICAGO	1:00
NOV. 29	AT CINCINNATI	1:00
DEC. 6	**GREEN BAY**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT CAROLINA	1:00
DEC. 20	AT TAMPA BAY	1:00
DEC. 27	**ARIZONA**	**1:00**
JAN. 3	AT ATLANTA	1:00
TBD	**TAMPA BAY**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE STAFF

Head Coach: **KELLEN MOORE**
Record With Team: **6-11**
Career Record: **6-11**
Offensive Coordinator: **DOUG NUSSMEIER**
Defensive Coordinator: **BRANDON STALEY**
Special Teams Coordinator: **PHIL GALIANO**
Quarterbacks: **SCOTT TOLZIEN**
Associate Head Coach/Running Backs: **JOEL THOMAS**
Run Game Coordinator: **T.J. PAGANETTI**
Wide Receivers: **KEITH WILLIAMS**
Tight Ends: **CHASE HASLETT**
Offensive Line: **BRENDAN NUGENT**
Defensive Line: **BO DAVIS**
Edges: **JAY RODGERS**
Linebackers: **PETER SIRMON**
Cornerbacks: **GRADY BROWN**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: **TERRY JOSEPH**

It took four games for the New Orleans Saints franchise to feel better about its future than it has in a long time. Starting in December 2025, New Orleans saw enough out of first-year head coach Kellen Moore and rookie quarterback Tyler Shough while winning four straight games to feel it had finally emerged from the Sean Payton and Drew Brees post-retirement wilderness.

Armed with better resources than they have had in recent years, the Saints fortified the offense around Shough, using free agency and the draft to bring explosive playmakers and a proven offensive guard into the fold.

Still, that small sample size might prove to be fool's gold. If late 2025 offered hope, the 2026 season will be about proving that hope was warranted. In an ever-weak NFC South, that may be enough to contend for a division title and end a five-year playoff drought.

OFFENSE

Everything hinges upon whether Shough is truly the answer for this team, and the Saints devoted a lot of resources to this side of the ball to find that out.

The Saints had one of the least explosive groups of running backs in the NFL last season. Five running backs carried the ball for New Orleans last season, and they combined for 20 carries of 10 yards or more. Enter Travis Etienne Jr., who signed a $52 million free-agent deal to add some juice to the ground attack. Etienne has recorded at least 22 runs of 10-plus yards in three of his four seasons.

By the time last season ended, the Saints were effectively employing a group of street free-agent pass-catchers. They used the draft to increase their stable of quality targets, selecting Arizona State's Jordyn Tyson with the No. 8 overall pick and adding two developmental players with high ceilings — Georgia tight end Oscar Delp and North Dakota State receiver Bryce Lance — in the later rounds.

Those players should complement what New Orleans already has on its roster. Receiver Chris Olave proved he could stay healthy (outside of missing the final game with a blood clot) and turned in an All-Pro season. Devaughn Vele came along slowly after the Saints acquired him in a trade before the start of the season, but he displayed a nice connection with Shough until a shoulder injury ended his season. Tight end Juwan Johnson had his long-awaited breakout (77 receptions, 889 yards, plus-32.8 receiving EPA) and will now pair with veteran free-agent signee Noah Fant.

And, critically, the Saints shored up their last weak link on the offensive line by signing left guard David Edwards to a $61 million free-agent deal. He joins a group that includes promising first-round tackles Kelvin Banks Jr. and Taliese Fuaga, along with Pro Bowl center Erik McCoy and right guard Cesar Ruiz.

The key for the offensive line — which is true around the league — is health. When he's on the field, McCoy is a true difference-maker. But injuries have limited McCoy to seven games each of the past two years.

The Saints have surrounded Shough with the firepower to maximize his development. If he is not able to carry over his strong finish from his rookie season, the Saints will know it's not because he didn't have enough around him.

DEFENSE

The first season under defensive coordinator Brandon Staley's direction went as well as anyone could have reasonably expected. Staley took almost the exact

TYLER SHOUGH
QUARTERBACK

KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

same personnel from the season before and molded it to his 3-4 base defense to great effect.

After bottoming out in the final year of the Dennis Allen era, the Saints' defense ranked 11th in EPA per play (minus-.09). They limited big plays in the passing game (allowing just 179.9 yards per game) and finished the season with the NFL's No. 3 run defense by EPA per play (minus-.10).

Staley got the most out of pass-rusher Chase Young, who recorded his first double-digit sack season despite missing the first five games with a calf injury. New Orleans also got positive contributions from several members of its rookie class, including mid-round picks Jonas Sanker and Quincy Riley, who took over as starters in the secondary early in the year.

Now Staley and Co. need to figure out how to take another step forward without as much proven talent. Two of the Saints' better defensive players, slot corner Alontae Taylor and linebacker Demario Davis, signed rich free-agent deals elsewhere. New Orleans will feel Davis' departure acutely, as the veteran had not only played at a high level for the better part of a decade but was also a core leader in the locker room.

The Saints signed Kaden Elliss to help offset Davis' loss. Elliss was originally a Saints draft pick and is returning from Atlanta, where he topped 100 tackles and three sacks in each of his three seasons there. He is almost seven years younger than Davis and may add more in specific areas — especially as a pass-rusher — but the Saints will still have to replace Davis' on-field leadership and coverage ability.

Taylor's spot may prove more difficult to fill. In Staley's defense, Taylor played the "Star" position, which comes with more responsibility than a traditional nickel corner. New Orleans may try veteran Julian Blackmon in the role after he impressed during training camp in 2025, but Blackmon has also missed most of the past two seasons with shoulder issues.

The Saints made a couple of rotational additions, using a second-round pick on Georgia defensive tackle Christen Miller to add physicality up front and sending a 2026 fifth-rounder to Las Vegas for edge Tyree Wilson, the seventh overall pick in 2023.

But this is a unit that lost more than it gained — and we haven't mentioned franchise pillar Cameron Jordan, the eight-time Pro Bowl defensive end who departed in free agency. Unless Staley has another unexpected jump in the works, this unit feels bound to regress.

SPECIALISTS

The Saints have spent the last several years going into the season with an undrafted or untested player at punter. After years of subpar performance at the spot, they finally gave up on the dice rolls and spent on the position, signing former Minnesota Vikings punter Ryan Wright.

The real question is at placekicker. Native Irishman Charlie Smyth had never kicked an American football prior to the 2024 season, but he's got an extremely powerful kicking leg and he offers intriguing upside as long as he can find consistency. Smyth hit 12 of his 16 field-goal attempts last season with a long of 57 and has made them from 70 in practice.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Shough started only nine games as a rookie and still finished as the Offensive Rookie of the Year runner-up. Now he has a full offseason as the guy at quarterback — and the expectations that come with that.

If Shough is an improved version of the player he was in 2025, he could lead an improved Saints roster back into legitimate playoff contention. Shough showed all the requisite traits as a rookie to make that real: He's big, athletic and he can throw accurately and on time to every part of the field.

But nine starts are not enough to provide a definitive answer on whether Shough is the franchise quarterback. The 2026 Saints season — and what comes next — will all boil down to that question.

2025 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept. 7	Arizona	L	13-20
Sept. 14	San Francisco	L	21-26
Sept. 21	at Seattle	L	13-44
Sept. 28	at Buffalo	L	19-31
Oct. 5	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**W**	**26-14**
Oct. 12	New England	L	19-25
Oct. 19	at Chicago	L	14-26
Oct. 26	Tampa Bay	L	3-23
Nov. 2	at L.A. Rams	L	10-34
Nov. 9	**AT CAROLINA**	**W**	**17-7**
Nov. 23	Atlanta	L	10-24
Nov. 30	at Miami	L	17-21
Dec. 7	**AT TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**24-20**
Dec. 14	**CAROLINA**	**W**	**20-17**
Dec. 21	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**29-6**
Dec. 28	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**34-26**
Jan. 4	at Atlanta	L	17-19

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	313.6	23	13
RUSHING	94.3	28	15
PASSING	219.3	13	8
SCORING	18.0	28	16
THIRD DOWN %	39.5	18	10
POINTS/PLAY	0.285	29	16

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	299.8	9	3
RUSHING	120.6	19	7
PASSING	179.2	4	2
SCORING	22.5	16	8
INTERCEPTIONS	10	T18	T9
SACKS	45	T10	6
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.364	13	6
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-4	T23	12

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
TYLER SHOUGH	327	221	2,384	10	6
SPENCER RATTLER	257	174	1,586	8	5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
ALVIN KAMARA	131	471	3.6	1
DEVIN NEAL	57	206	3.6	2
AUDRIC ESTIME	46	198	4.3	1
KENDRE MILLER	47	193	4.1	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
CHRIS OLAVE	100	1,163	11.6	9
JUWAN JOHNSON	77	889	11.5	3
RASHID SHAHEED	44	499	11.3	2
ALVIN KAMARA	33	186	5.6	0
DEVAUGHN VELE	25	293	11.7	2

KICKING: Blake Grupe, 18-26 FGs, 15-15 PATs, 69 points; Charlie Smyth, 12-16 FGs, 13-13 PATs, 49 points
TACKLES: Demario Davis, 143; Alontae Taylor, 83
SACKS: Cameron Jordan, 10.5; Chase Young, 10.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Kool-Aid McKinstry, 3; 2 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

TOUR DE SHOUGH It was an eventful offseason for Tyler Shough. Not only did he and his wife welcome their first child shortly after the season, but Shough also maintained a visible presence just about everywhere in New Orleans — including a day riding as the Grand Marshal in the Krewe of Pygmalion Mardi Gras parade. New Orleans police had an escort ready that day in case his wife, Jordan, went into labor.

FAMILY MATTERS New Saints wideout **Jordyn Tyson** was not the first of his family to be selected in the first round of a professional sports draft. His older brother, Jaylon Tyson, was a first-round selection of the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers in 2024. He's also not the only Saints player with a sibling in pro sports. Linebacker Kaden Elliss is the son of former All-Pro Luther Elliss, and his brothers Christian and Jonah both played in the NFL last season. Cornerback Rejzohn Wright's brother Nahshon Wright signed with the New York Jets this offseason after his breakout five-interception 2025 campaign with the Chicago Bears.

RE-BIRTH-DAY This year marks the 20-year anniversary of one of the most iconic moments in franchise history. The Caesars Superdome re-opened in 2006 following the disaster that was Hurricane Katrina, and in the first game back on their home turf — on Monday Night Football against the hated Atlanta Falcons — special-teamer Steve Gleason stormed through the line to block a punt. Gleason has since become iconic for different reasons, using his personal fight against ALS to raise awareness for the disease.

MAN OF MANY TALENTS The Saints signed Justin Reid in free agency last year to provide a steady veteran presence to the secondary, but they got more than that. Reid is the type of person who will explore his interests deeply. Just in the last five years, he has become a ranked chess player, learned how to play golf (and gotten his handicap down to seven) and taken photography lessons. Reid recently shot the Zurich Classic golf tournament as a photographer.

SCOUTING THE SAINTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ORLEANS

"Turns out Mickey Loomis knew what he was doing. Tyler Shough has a real shot at quarterback for them. There's still upside there. … Signing Travis Etienne Jr. should be a game-changer for this offense. Etienne can do it all. He had a ton of interest around the league. Having a 1-2 punch with Etienne and Alvin Kamara should be a potent tandem. It takes pressure off of Kamara, too. … I like the athleticism they have at tight end with Juwan Johnson and Noah Fant. That's a good position group. … The Saints are thrilled to have Jordyn Tyson in their receiving corps. … Chris Olave has dealt with injury issues but remains a viable receiver when he's out there. … Kelvin Banks Jr. was a pick New Orleans had to have a year ago. A year later, they're still excited to have him as their left tackle. … David Edwards should bolster the interior line. … This shapes up as one of the top interior lines in the NFL between Edwards, Erik McCoy and Cesar Ruiz. … The Saints run a 3-4 base defense, and the interior line got bigger and tougher with the selection of Christen Miller. … A second chance for Raiders first-round bust Tyree Wilson. … Post-draft, adding Martin Emerson Jr., who's healthy now, should boost the secondary. … Carl Granderson has pass-rushing moves for days. … This is a fairly good linebacker group with Pete Werner, Kaden Elliss and Chase Young to go with Granderson. … Justin Reid gives the Saints a hard hitter and true professionalism. … Kool-Aid McKinstry has made some real strides over the past year."

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 SAINTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 Rattler, Spencer	QB	6-0	211	2	South Carolina	D5a-24	D5a-NO-24
6 Shough, Tyler	QB	6-5	219	1	Louisville	D2-25	D2-NO-25
4 Wilson, Zach	QB	6-2	214	5	BYU	FA-Mia-26	D1a-NYJ-21

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Chandler, Ty	RB	5-11	205	4	North Carolina	FA-Min-26	D5b-Min-22
30 Estime, Audric	RB	5-11	227	2	Notre Dame	FA-25	D5-Den-24
3 Etienne Jr., Travis	RB	5-10	215	5	Clemson	FA-Jac-26	D1b-Jac-21
41 Kamara, Alvin	RB	5-10	215	9	Tennessee	D3a-17	D3a-NO-17
5 Miller, Kendre	RB	6-0	220	3	TCU	D3-23	D3-NO-23
24 Neal, Devin	RB	5-11	213	1	Kansas	D6-25	D6-NO-25

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
85 Alford, Damien	WR	6-6	210	1	Utah	FA-26	FA-NO-26
81 Austin Jr., Kevin	WR	6-2	200	2	Notre Dame	FA-24	FA-Jac-22
11 Bell, Ronnie	WR	6-0	192	3	Michigan	FA-25	D7-SF-23
87 Fant, Noah	TE	6-4	249	7	Iowa	FA-Cin-26	D1-Den-19
83 Johnson, Juwan	TE	6-4	231	6	Oregon	FA-20	FA-NO-20
80 Matavao, Moliki	TE	6-6	263	1	UCLA	D7a-25	D7a-NO-25
16 Means, Bub	WR	6-2	215	2	Pitt	D5b-24	D5b-NO-24
84 Mitchell-Paden, Zaire	TE	6-5	257	1	Florida Atlantic	W-Bal-25	FA-Cle-22
12 Olave, Chris	WR	6-0	187	4	Ohio State	D1a-22	D1a-NO-22
10 Palmer, Trey	WR	6-1	190	3	Nebraska	W-TB-25	D6b-TB-23
13 Polk, Ja'Lynn	WR	6-1	203	2	Washington	T-NE-25	D2-NE-24
15 Tipton, Mason	WR	5-11	187	2	Yale	FA-24	FA-NO-24
14 Vele, Devaughn	WR	6-5	210	2	Utah	T-Den-25	D7a-Den-24
82 Welch, Treyton	TE	6-4	240	1	Wyoming	FA-24	FA-Cle-24

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Banks Jr., Kelvin	T	6-5	315	1	Texas	D1-25	D1-NO-25
76 Edwards, David	G	6-6	308	7	Wisconsin	FA-Buf-26	D5-LAR-19
75 Fuaga, Taliese	T	6-6	324	2	Oregon State	D1-24	D1-NO-24
73 Kilty, Easton	T	6-6	307	1	Kansas State	FA-25	FA-NO-25
78 McCoy, Erik	C/G	6-4	303	7	Texas A&M	D2-19	D2-NO-19
77 Radunz, Dillon	OL	6-6	301	5	North Dakota State	FA-Ten-25	D2-Ten-21
72 Richards, Asim	OL	6-4	307	3	North Carolina	T-Dal-25	D5-Dal-23
51 Ruiz, Cesar	C/G	6-4	316	6	Michigan	D1-20	D1-NO-20
64 Saldiveri, Nick	OL	6-6	316	3	Old Dominion	D4a-23	D4a-NO-23
66 Sherman, William	G	6-4	300	1	Colorado	FA-25	D6-NE-21
68 Simpkins III, Torricelli	G	6-5	312	1	South Carolina	FA-25	FA-NO-25
74 Truss, Xavier	T/G	6-7	320	1	Georgia	W-Den-25	FA-Den-25
69 Wesley, Barry	T	6-7	310	1	Colorado State	FA-25	FA-Atl-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97 Boyd, Khristian	DT	6-2	320	2	Northern Iowa	D6-24	D6-NO-24
90 Bresee, Bryan	DT	6-5	305	3	Clemson	D1-23	D1-NO-23
91 Broughton, Vernon	DT	6-5	311	1	Texas	D3a-25	D3a-NO-25
57 Cole, Myles	DE	6-6	278	1	Texas Tech	FA-26	D7-Jac-24
40 Diggs, Fadil	DE	6-4	257	1	Syracuse	D7b-25	D7b-NO-25
92 Godchaux, Davon	DT	6-3	330	9	LSU	T-NE-25	D5b-Mia-17
59 Izzard, Coziah	DT	6-3	305	1	Penn State	FA-25	FA-KC-25
54 Jennings, Anfernee	DE	6-2	255	6	Alabama	FA-NE-26	D3a-NE-20
95 Ridgeway III, John	DT	6-5	321	4	Arkansas	T-Was-24	D5-Dal-22
93 Shepherd, Nathan	DT	6-4	315	8	Fort Hays State	FA-NYJ-23	D3-NYJ-18
98 Wilson, Tyree	DE	6-5	263	3	Texas Tech	T-LV-26	D1-LV-23
99 Young, Chase	DE	6-5	265	6	Ohio State	FA-SF-24	D1-Was-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55 Elliss, Kaden	LB	6-2	240	7	Idaho	FA-Atl-26	D7b-NO-19
53 Ford, Jaylan	LB	6-2	240	2	Texas	D5c-24	D5c-NO-24
96 Granderson, Carl	LB	6-5	261	7	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-NO-19
58 Rumph II, Chris	LB	6-2	244	5	Duke	FA-LAC-25	D4-LAC-21
44 Stalbird, Isaiah	LB	6-1	215	1	South Dakota State	FA-24	FA-NO-24
28 Stutsman, Danny	LB	6-3	233	1	Oklahoma	D4a-25	D4a-NO-25
20 Werner, Pete	LB	6-3	242	5	Ohio State	D2-21	D2-NO-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37 Beanum, Dalys	CB	6-1	200	1	South Dakota State	FA-25	FA-NO-25
22 Bishop, Beanie	CB	5-10	184	1	West Virginia	FA-25	FA-Pit-24
23 Blackmon, Julian	S	6-0	202	6	Utah	FA-25	D3-Ind-20
26 Burgess, Terrell	S	5-11	202	5	Utah	FA-25	D3-LAR-20
35 Davison, Elliott	S	6-0	190	1	UTSA	FA-25	FA-NO-25
47 Emerson Jr., Martin	CB	6-2	201	4	Mississippi State	FA-Cle-26	D3a-Cle-22
31 Howden, Jordan	DB	6-0	209	3	Minnesota	D5-23	D5-NO-23
1 McKinstry, Kool-Aid	CB	5-11	199	2	Alabama	D2-24	D2-NO-24
38 Price, Jayden	CB	511	185	1	North Dakota State	FA-25	FA-Atl-24
21 Reid, Justin	S	6-1	207	8	Stanford	FA-KC-25	D3a-Hou-18
29 Riley, Quincy	CB	5-11	195	1	Louisville	D4b-25	D4b-NO-25
33 Sanker, Jonas	S	6-1	211	1	Virginia	D3b-25	D3b-NO-25
25 Wright, Rejzohn	CB	6-2	193	2	Oregon State	FA-24	FA-Car-23
27 Yiadom, Isaac	CB	6-1	188	8	Boston College	FA-SF-25	D3-Den-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39 Smyth, Charlie	K	6-4	210	1	None	FA-24	FA-NO-24
49 Wood, Zach	LS	6-3	255	9	SMU	FA-17	FA-Dal-16
17 Wright, Ryan	P	6-3	245	4	Tulane	FA-Min-26	FA-Min-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	12	Chris Olave	13	Ja'Lynn Polk
WR	14	Devaughn Vele	18	Bryce Lance (R)
WR	0	Jordyn Tyson (R)	19	Barion Brown (R)
LT	71	Kelvin Banks Jr.	72	Asim Richards
LG	76	David Edwards	77	Dillon Radunz
C	78	Erik McCoy	68	Torricelli Simpkins III
RG	51	Cesar Ruiz	65	Jeremiah Wright (R)
RT	75	Taliese Fuaga	74	Xavier Truss
TE	83	Juwan Johnson	87	Noah Fant
QB	6	Tyler Shough	2	Spencer Rattler
RB	3	Travis Etienne Jr.	41	Alvin Kamara

DEFENSE

DE	90	Bryan Bresee	91	Vernon Broughton
NT	92	Davon Godchaux	52	Christen Miller (R)
DT	93	Nathan Shepherd	95	John Ridgeway III
OLB	99	Chase Young	98	Tyree Wilson
MLB	55	Kaden Elliss	28	Danny Stutsman
WLB	20	Pete Werner	53	Jaylan Ford
OLB	96	Carl Granderson	58	Chris Rumph II
CB	1	Kool-Aid McKinstry	25	Rejzohn Wright
CB	29	Quincy Riley	27	Isaac Yiadom
S	21	Justin Reid	23	Julian Blackmon
S	33	Jonas Sanker	31	Jordan Howden

SPECIALISTS

K	39	Charlie Smyth	KR	19	Barion Brown (R)
P	17	Ryan Wright	PR	19	Barion Brown (R)

-218

Saints running backs combined for minus-218 rushing yards over expected in 2025, the worst total in the league by 51 yards.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Jordyn Tyson	WR	6-2	203	Arizona State
2	Christen Miller	DT	6-3	321	Georgia
3	Oscar Delp	TE	6-4	245	Georgia
4	Jeremiah Wright	G	6-5	331	Auburn
4	Bryce Lance	WR	6-3	204	North Dakota State
6	Lorenzo Styles Jr.	S	6-0	194	Ohio State
6	Barion Brown	WR	5-11	177	LSU
7	TJ Hall	DB	6-0	189	Iowa

The Saints swung for the fences with Jordyn Tyson, who may end up as the best wide receiver in the 2026 draft — as long as he can stay healthy. Tyson missed time with three different injuries in college. Christen Miller gives the Saints' defensive front some size and explosiveness, while most of the rest of the class was all about adding to the team's speed. That includes Oscar Delp, who ran a blistering 4.49-second 40-yard dash at 245 pounds at the NFL Scouting Combine. Keep an eye on Bryce Lance, the speedy younger brother of quarterback Trey Lance, who could carve out a role as a deep threat early on. The Saints could have used a defensive back early, which hurt their grade.

BUCCANEERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
1

The Bucs finally saw their streak of four straight NFC South titles come to an end last season, as an impressive 6-2 start dissolved into an 8-9 finish, thanks in large part to significant injuries to key players. Todd Bowles was retained as head coach despite the late-season collapse, but he'll have a new offensive coaching staff in 2026 under coordinator Zac Robinson, who called plays for the division-rival Atlanta Falcons last season.

Bowles will attempt to right the ship without two franchise legends in wide receiver Mike Evans and linebacker Lavonte David, both of whom departed in the offseason. Key additions in free agency on both sides of the ball (linebacker Alex Anzalone, running back Kenneth Gainwell, defensive lineman A'Shawn Robinson) should help, but Tampa Bay's fortunes will largely depend on quarterback Baker Mayfield staying healthy and returning to his MVP-level play from early last season.

OFFENSE

Mayfield is heading into the final year of his contract hoping to recapture the level of production that led the Bucs to their strong start last season. Staying healthy will be key to that endeavor; Mayfield pushed through multiple injuries as Tampa Bay floundered down the stretch in 2025. He'll be breaking in yet another new offensive coordinator, but Zac Robinson's system comes from the same Sean McVay tree that produced Liam Coen, under whom Mayfield thrived in 2024.

Things won't be the same on offense for Tampa Bay, as future Hall of Famer Evans opted to leave in free agency instead of finishing his career where it started as a top-10 pick in 2014. The Bucs' passing game will be counting on receiver Chris Godwin Jr. to return to form after a couple of injury-plagued seasons, as well as a stellar sophomore campaign from first-round receiver Emeka Egbuka, who was the early front-runner for NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year until a hamstring injury derailed his impressive rookie campaign. Fellow wideout Jalen McMillan is primed for a bounce-back after a scary neck injury last preseason cost him most of 2025, while 2025 seventh-rounder Tez Johnson and rookie third-round pick Ted Hurst will bring plenty of upside to the passing game.

No unit was hit harder by injuries in Tampa Bay than the offensive line last year, which saw All-Pro left tackle Tristan Wirfs miss the start of the season, while right tackle Luke Goedeke and guards Cody Mauch and Ben Bredeson both missed significant chunks of the year. The Bucs are planning to have their starting five back at full strength for Week 1 this year, which should allow their talented playmakers to live up to their full potential after a disappointing 2025 season.

Running back Bucky Irving returns as the presumed starter in the backfield after missing a long stretch of the 2025 season himself with multiple injuries, but he'll have a new running mate in Gainwell, who replaces departed free agent Rachaad White as the team's likely presence on third downs. Restricted free agent Sean Tucker returns and will once again bring short-yardage value and much-needed muscle to a group that relies on the undersized but explosive talents of Irving and Gainwell otherwise.

DEFENSE

Despite having many players who have performed in Bowles' scheme for most of his tenure, Tampa Bay's defense continued to struggle with consistency,

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT CINCINNATI	1:00
SEPT. 20	**CLEVELAND**	**1:00**
SEPT. 27	**MINNESOTA**	**4:05**
OCT. 4	**GREEN BAY**	**1:00**
OCT. 8	AT DALLAS	8:15
OCT. 18	**PITTSBURGH**	**1:00**
OCT. 25	AT CAROLINA	1:00
NOV. 1	**ATLANTA**	**1:00**
NOV. 8	AT CHICAGO	8:20
NOV. 15	BYE	
NOV. 22	AT DETROIT	1:00
NOV. 30	**CAROLINA**	**8:15**
DEC. 6	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**1:00**
DEC. 13	AT BALTIMORE	1:00
DEC. 20	**NEW ORLEANS**	**1:00**
TBD	AT ATLANTA	
TBD	**L.A. RAMS**	
TBD	AT NEW ORLEANS	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	NFC PLAYOFFS	13
2022	NFC PLAYOFFS	8
2023	NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2024	NFC PLAYOFFS	10
2025		8

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **TODD BOWLES**
Record With Team: **35-33**
Career Record: **61-74**
Offensive Coordinator: **ZAC ROBINSON**
Special Teams Coordinator: **DANNY SMITH**
Quarterbacks: **CHANDLER WHITMER**
Running Backs: **SKIP PEETE**
Wide Receivers: **BRYAN McCLENDON**
Tight Ends: **JUSTIN PEELLE**
Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line: **KEVIN CARBERRY**
Pass Game Coordinator: **GEORGE EDWARDS**
Pass Game Coordinator: **T.J. YATES**
Defensive Line: **MARCUS WEST**
Inside Linebackers: **MIKE CALDWELL**
Run Game Coordinator/Outside Linebackers: **LARRY FOOTE**
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: **GEORGE EDWARDS**
Cornerbacks: **RASHAD JOHNSON**
Safeties: **TIM ATKINS**

BUCCANEERS
6

BAKER MAYFIELD
QUARTERBACK

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

communication and execution throughout the entire 2025 season. Crucial failures in clutch moments cost the Bucs multiple games and, ultimately, a fifth straight division title.

David retired after 14 seasons, leaving the group with a massive void, both on the field and in the locker room. Anzalone was signed in free agency to help replace some of that veteran experience, and Tampa Bay spent its second-round pick in the draft on Missouri linebacker Josiah Trotter, who should push to be a Week 1 starter.

The defensive front will once again be anchored by nose tackle Vita Vea, who dominates against the run while bringing surprising pass-rushing ability for his size. Defensive tackle Calijah Kancey has been productive and impactful when healthy, but has to prove he can stay healthy for a full season, while veteran A'Shawn Robinson adds more size, toughness and experience in the trenches.

Many of Tampa Bay's defensive issues over the past few seasons started with the lack of a consistently effective pass rush, but the arrival of Rueben Bain Jr., the Bucs' first-round pick in this year's draft, should help remedy that. Bain was a dominant all-around defender at Miami (Fla.), and his violent and high-effort style of play is exactly what this defense needs to generate more pressure and create more big plays while setting a more punishing tone across the board. Bain will line up alongside outside linebacker Yaya Diaby, while free-agent addition Al-Quadin Muhammad brings pass-rushing upside after a productive 2025 campaign with the Detroit Lions.

The secondary lost cornerback Jamel Dean to free agency and will count on young players to step up in his absence. Zyon McCollum's performance took a step back at corner last season after he inked a lucrative contract extension, while 2025 second-round pick Benjamin Morrison hopes to make a bigger impact now that he's fully healthy. Slot/nickel Jacob Parrish made an immediate splash as a rookie last season and is primed for even bigger things in his second year. The back end will once again be anchored by former All-Pro Antoine Winfield Jr. and Tykee Smith, both of whom will be counted on to provide leadership following David's departure. Look for fourth-round draft pick Keionte Scott to make an instant impact as a rotational player who can line up all over the defense.

SPECIALISTS

The Bucs have all three of their starting specialists back from last season, but placekicker Chase McLaughlin will be hoping to return to his previous form after nearly a 10-percentage-point drop in his field-goal accuracy last year compared to the two seasons prior. Riley Dixon will once again handle the punting duties, while Evan Deckers takes care of the long-snapping.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Even with the massive losses of Evans and David, and the overhaul of the offensive coaching staff, the Bucs still believe they have everything they need to get back to the top of the NFC South and earn the chance to make a deep postseason run in 2026. Much will depend on their ability to avoid the injuries that scuttled the season last year, but new leaders will have to step up and fill the void in the locker room and on the sideline as much as what No. 13 and No. 54 brought on the field. Bowles' defense will have to generate more pass rush and splash plays, while Mayfield will have to straddle that fine line between the daring playing style that makes him special and sound decision-making that will allow the team to win close games and deliver in clutch moments.

2025 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 7	**AT ATLANTA**	**W**	**23-20**
Sept. 15	**AT HOUSTON**	**W**	**20-19**
Sept. 21	**N.Y. JETS**	**W**	**29-27**
Sept. 28	Philadelphia	L	25-31
Oct. 5	**AT SEATTLE**	**W**	**38-35**
Oct. 12	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**30-19**
Oct. 20	at Detroit	L	9-24
Oct. 26	**AT NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**23-3**
Nov. 9	New England	L	23-28
Nov. 16	at Buffalo	L	32-44
Nov. 23	at L.A. Rams	L	7-34
Nov. 30	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**20-17**
Dec. 7	New Orleans	L	20-24
Dec. 11	Atlanta	L	28-29
Dec. 21	at Carolina	L	20-23
Dec. 28	at Miami	L	17-20
Jan. 3	**CAROLINA**	**W**	**16-14**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	320.4	21	11
RUSHING	114.5	21	12
PASSING	205.9	20	11
SCORING	22.4	T17	T8
THIRD DOWN %	41.2	11	5
POINTS/PLAY	0.356	21	11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	337.2	19	10
RUSHING	99.1	5	2
PASSING	238.2	27	14
SCORING	24.2	T20	10
INTERCEPTIONS	13	T11	T6
SACKS	37	T18	10
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.411	24	12
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+7	6	3

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
BAKER MAYFIELD	543	343	3,693	26	11

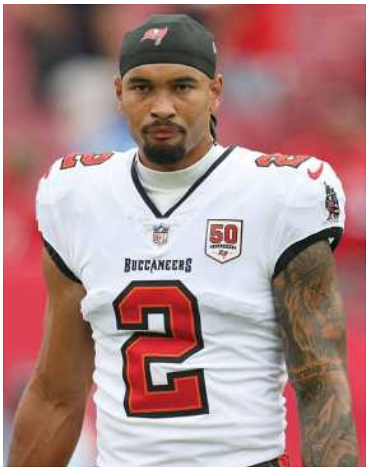
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
BUCKY IRVING	173	588	3.4	1
RACHAAD WHITE	132	572	4.3	4
BAKER MAYFIELD	55	382	6.9	1
SEAN TUCKER	86	320	3.7	7

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
EMEKA EGBUKA	63	938	14.9	6
CADE OTTON	59	572	9.7	1
RACHAAD WHITE	40	218	5.5	0
STERLING SHEPARD	39	371	9.5	1
CHRIS GODWIN	33	360	10.9	2

KICKING: Chase McLaughlin, 32-38 FGs, 32-33 PATs, 128 points; **TACKLES:** Lavonte David, 114; SirVocea Dennis, 101; **SACKS:** YaYa Diaby, 7.0; Vita Vea, 4.5 **INTERCEPTIONS:** Jamel Dean, 3; 2 players tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

END OF AN ERA Tampa Bay's locker room will have two massive voids this season, one on each side of the ball. Mike Evans, the franchise leader in every major receiving category, left in free agency to sign with the San Francisco 49ers after 12 years with the Bucs. Lavonte David, one of the most legendary linebackers the team has ever known, retired after 14 seasons. Both will be in Canton one day, but the Bucs will miss both their leadership and on-field production in the meantime.



NAMING RIGHTS In November of 2025, Bucs wide receiver **Emeka Egbuka** suggested during one of the team's social media videos that Baker Mayfield should name his son "Maverick." Mayfield seemed intrigued but admitted that any name ideas would have to go through "the chain of command." It clearly got the seal of approval from Baker's wife, Emily, because the couple welcomed Maverick Thorne Mayfield into the world on April 16, 2026.

BAKING THE BOOKS Heading into his fourth season with the team, Mayfield is quickly leaving his mark on the Bucs' record books. He already ranks seventh in franchise history in passing yards, and his 95 touchdown passes in a Tampa Bay uniform trail only Jameis Winston and Tom Brady in the Bucs record book. Mayfield needs just 2,584 passing yards to leap into the No. 2 spot behind Winston on the team's all-time passing yards list, while 27 touchdown passes in 2026 would make him Tampa Bay's franchise leader.

FAMILY BUSINESS The Bucs spent their second-round pick in the 2026 NFL Draft on Missouri linebacker Josiah Trotter, but One Buc Place won't be unfamiliar territory for the rookie defender. Trotter's dad, Jeremiah, spent most of his 11-year NFL career with the Philadelphia Eagles but played the 2007 campaign in Tampa Bay. Trotter's brother, Jeremiah Jr., was drafted by the Eagles out of Clemson two years ago and is still on their current roster.

SCOUTING THE BUCCANEERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TAMPA BAY

"Baker Mayfield continues to be a great signing for general manager Jason Licht. Mayfield plays the game with moxie, has a strong arm and he can run. He's a good scrambler. Yes, he's due for a significant raise. … Running back is not bad at all with Bucky Irving and Kenneth Gainwell. Together, this is a nice tandem. … I like everything about left tackle Tristan Wirfs. He's a plus-blocker in every category. Between Emeka Egbuka, Chris Godwin Jr. and rookie Ted Hurst, the receivers should have enough juice to make up for the free-agent loss of future Hall of Famer Mike Evans. Licht and the entire organization were disappointed that Evans opted to go to the San Francisco 49ers rather than stay in Tampa Bay. … The offensive line overall is pretty competitive with Ben Bredeson, Graham Barton, Cody Mauch and Luke Goedeke. … The defense is anchored by massive nose tackle Vita Vea. No one likes blocking that guy. It's a long day's work. … Having Calijah Kancey back makes a big difference for the defensive front seven. … Alex Anzalone was a good addition. … Rueben Bain Jr. satisfied us with his answers about the car accident. It's behind him. We had more questions about his short arms, but we loved his motor and moves. … Antoine Winfield Jr. is a special safety. Tackles, runs, covers, does it all. … Not super impressed with the overall depth of the secondary. Feels like they could use an influx of skill and speed there."

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 BUCS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Bazelak, Connor	QB	6-3	225	1	Bowling Green	FA-25	FA-TB-25
5 Browning, Jake	QB	6-2	209	3	Washington	FA-Cin-26	FA-Min-19
6 Mayfield, Baker	QB	6-1	215	8	Oklahoma	FA-LAR-23	D1a-Cle-18

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1 Gainwell, Kenneth	RB	5-9	200	5	Memphis	FA-Pit-26	D5-Phi-21
7 Irving, Bucky	RB	5-10	195	2	Oregon	D4-24	D4-TB-24
44 Tucker, Sean	RB	5-10	205	3	Syracuse	FA-23	FA-TB-23
18 Williams, Josh	RB	5-9	210	1	LSU	FA-25	FA-TB-25

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Culp, Devin	TE	6-4	237	2	Washington	D7-24	D7-TB-24
87 Durham, Payne	TE	6-5	255	3	Purdue	D5b-23	D5b-TB-23
2 Egbuka, Emeka	WR	6-1	205	1	Ohio State	D1-25	D1-TB-25
14 Godwin Jr., Chris	WR	6-1	209	9	Penn State	D3a-17	D3a-TB-17
85 Greene, Garrett	WR	5-11	201	1	West Virginia	FA-25	FA-TB-25
89 Houston, Dennis	WR	6-1	190	1	Western Illinois	FA-24	FA-Dal-22
19 Johnson, Kameron	WR	5-10	170	2	Barton	FA-24	FA-TB-24
15 Johnson, Tez	WR	5-10	165	1	Oregon	D7-25	D7-TB-25
41 Kieft, Ko	TE	6-5	265	4	Minnesota	D6-22	D6-TB-22
11 McMillan, Jalen	WR	6-1	192	2	Washington	D3b-24	D3b-TB-24
88 Otton, Cade	TE	6-5	247	4	Washington	D4a-22	D4a-TB-22
80 Sills V, David	WR	6-3	211	4	West Virginia	FA-Atl-26	FA-Buf-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62 Barton, Graham	C	6-5	314	2	Duke	D1-24	D1-TB-24
68 Bredeson, Ben	G	6-5	315	6	Michigan	FA-NYG-24	D4-Bal-20
70 Chukwuma, Benjamin	T	6-6	310	1	Georgia State	FA-25	FA-TB-25
65 Feeney, Dan	G	6-4	310	9	Indiana	PS-Buf-25	D3-LAC-17
74 Foerner, Marshall	T	6-6	308	1	Minnesota State	FA-26	FA-Ind-25
67 Goedeke, Luke	T	6-5	312	4	Central Michigan	D2b-22	D2b-TB-22
72 Haggard, Luke	G	6-7	305	1	Indiana	FA-23	FA-TB-23
79 Klein, Elijah	G	6-4	319	2	UTEP	D6-24	D6-TB-24
69 Mauch, Cody	G	6-6	303	3	North Dakota State	D2-23	D2-TB-23
66 Scott, Ben	OL	6-5	310	1	Nebraska	FA-25	FA-TB-25
77 Skule, Justin	T	6-6	315	7	Vanderbilt	FA-Min-26	D6b-SF-19
78 Wirfs, Tristan	T	6-5	320	6	Iowa	D1-20	D1-TB-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
64 Hutmacher, Nash	DL	6-4	310	1	Nebraska	FA-25	FA-TB-25
93 Jones, Jayson	DL	6-6	340	1	Auburn	FA-25	FA-Bal-25
94 Kancey, Calijah	DL	6-0	280	3	Pitt	D1-23	D1-TB-23
60 Ndubuisi, Haggai	DT	6-7	323	1	None	FA-26	FA-Ari-22
56 Nuñez-Roches Sr., Rakeem	DL	6-2	305	11	Southern Miss	FA-NYG-26	D6-KC-15
95 Roberts, Elijah	DL	6-4	295	1	SMU	D5-25	D5-TB-25
91 Robinson, A'Shawn	DL	6-4	330	10	Alabama	FA-Car-26	D2-Det-16
92 Simmons, Elijah	DL	6-1	335	1	Tennessee	PS-Ari-25	FA-Ari-25
50 Vea, Vita	NT	6-4	347	8	Washington	D1-18	D1-TB-18

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Anzalone, Alex	LB	6-3	234	9	Florida	FA-Det-26	D3b-NO-17
43 Braswell, Chris	OLB	6-3	255	2	Alabama	D2-24	D2-TB-24
30 Bullock, John	LB	6-0	230	2	Nebraska	FA-Ind-26	FA-TB-25
8 Dennis, SirVocea	LB	6-0	230	3	Pitt	D5a-23	D5a-TB-23
0 Diaby, Yaya	OLB	6-4	270	3	Louisville	D3-23	D3-TB-23
53 Jackson, Nick	LB	6-0	235	1	Iowa	FA-25	FA-TB-25
59 Kamara, Mohamed	OLB	6-1	253	2	Colorado State	FA-25	D5-Mia-24
97 Muhammad, Al-Quadin	OLB	6-3	250	8	Miami (Fla.)	FA-Det-26	D6-NO-17
98 Nelson, Anthony	OLB	6-7	271	7	Iowa	D4-19	D4-TB-19
52 Rozeboom, Christian	LB	6-2	237	5	South Dakota State	FA-Car-26	FA-LAR-20
51 Walker, David	OLB	6-2	260	1	Central Arkansas	D4-25	D4-TB-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39 Banks, Marcus	S	6-0	190	1	Mississippi State	FA-25	FA-TB-24
37 Hall, Kemon	CB	5-11	190	4	North Texas	FA-Ten-26	FA-LAC-19
32 Hayes, Josh	CB	6-0	190	3	Kansas State	D6a-23	D6a-TB-23
29 Killebrew, Miles	S	6-2	222	10	Southern Utah	FA-Pit-26	D4-Pit-16
26 Lucas, Chase	CB	5-11	184	4	Arizona State	FA-SF-26	D7-Det-22
27 McCollum, Zyon	CB	6-2	199	4	Sam Houston	D5-22	D5-TB-22
21 Morrison, Benjamin	CB	6-0	190	1	Notre Dame	D2-25	D2-TB-25
25 Parrish, Jacob	CB	5-10	198	1	Kansas State	D3-25	D3-TB-25
36 Roberts, JJ	S	6-0	195	1	Marshall	FA-25	FA-TB-25
23 Smith, Tykee	S	5-10	202	2	Georgia	D3a-24	D3a-TB-24
28 Williams, Damarion	CB	5-10	183	3	Houston	FA-25	D4-Bal-22
31 Winfield Jr., Antoine	S	5-9	203	6	Minnesota	D2-20	D2-TB-20
38 Wisdom, Rashad	S	5-9	210	1	UTSA	FA-24	FA-TB-24

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Daly, Scott	LS	6-1	245	6	Notre Dame	FA-26	FA-Dal-18
86 Deckers, Evan	LS	6-3	252	2	Duke	FA-23	FA-TB-23
9 Dixon, Riley	P	6-4	221	10	Syracuse	FA-Den-25	D7-Den-16
4 McLaughlin, Chase	K	6-0	190	7	Illinois	FA-Ind-23	FA-Buf-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Chris Godwin Jr.	17	Ted Hurst (R)
WR	2	Emeka Egbuka	15	Tez Johnson
WR	11	Jalen McMillan	80	David Sills V
LT	78	Tristan Wirfs	70	Benjamin Chukwuma
LG	68	Ben Bredeson	75	Billy Schrauth (R)
C	62	Graham Barton	79	Elijah Klein
RG	69	Cody Mauch	65	Dan Feeney
RT	67	Luke Goedeke	77	Justin Skule
TE	88	Cade Otton	87	Payne Durham
QB	6	Baker Mayfield	5	Jake Browning
RB	7	Bucky Irving	1	Kenneth Gainwell

DEFENSE

DL	50	Vita Vea	90	DeMonte Capehart (R)
DL	94	Calijah Kancey	95	Elijah Roberts
OLB	0	Yaya Diaby	97	Al-Quadin Muhammad
ILB	34	Alex Anzalone	52	Christian Rozeboom
ILB	45	Josiah Trotter (R)	8	SirVocea Dennis
OLB	3	Rueben Bain Jr. (R)	98	Anthony Nelson
CB	27	Zyon McCollum	28	Damarion Williams
CB	21	Benjamin Morrison	32	Josh Hayes
NB	25	Jacob Parrish	22	Keionte Scott (R)
SS	23	Tykee Smith	29	Miles Killebrew
FS	31	Antoine Winfield Jr.	36	JJ Roberts

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Chase McLaughlin	KR	44	Sean Tucker
P	9	Riley Dixon	PR	19	Kameron Johnson

195.8 From Weeks 10-18, Baker Mayfield averaged just 195.8 passing yards per game and threw 10 interceptions as the Buccaneers went 2-7 and fell out of the NFC South lead.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Rueben Bain Jr.	OLB	6-2	263	Miami (Fla.)
2	Josiah Trotter	ILB	6-1	237	Missouri
3	Ted Hurst	WR	6-3	206	Georgia State
4	Keionte Scott	DB	5-11	193	Miami (Fla.)
5	DeMonte Capehart	DT	6-4	313	Clemson
5	Billy Schrauth	G	6-4	310	Notre Dame
6	Bauer Sharp	TE	6-4	249	LSU

Rueben Bain Jr. was arguably the most dominant defensive player in all of college football last season, making him a massive steal for the Bucs halfway through the first round. He's exactly what Tampa Bay's lackluster pass rush needs. Josiah Trotter is a perfect fit for head coach Todd Bowles' defense as a long-term replacement for Lavonte David, while Ted Hurst brings size and speed that was lacking in the receiver room. Keionte Scott is another ideal scheme fit who was a huge bargain in the fourth round and should make an instant impact no matter where he lines up. DeMonte Capehart and Billy Schrauth should provide valuable depth in the trenches on both sides of the ball, while Bauer Sharp fills their need for a blocking specialist at tight end.

CARDINALS

NFC WEST FORECAST
4

Change once again is the operative word when describing the Arizona Cardinals. After falling well short of expectations last year, Arizona cut bait with both head coach Jonathan Gannon and former franchise quarterback Kyler Murray. Now, it's on first-time head coach Mike LaFleur to turn things around in a hurry and be that next NFL success story. Easier said than done.

OFFENSE

Arizona enters this season without a clear-cut franchise quarterback for the first time since 2019. Jacoby Brissett is expected to take the reins on a full-time basis in 2026 following his 12 starts last season in relief of the injured Murray. He "looks the part" for what LaFleur wants in his quarterback and clearly moved the offense forward as the starter last year — even if the wins didn't follow. Despite taking over in Week 6 and operating with a stagnant run game and struggling offensive line, Brissett ended the season 14th in the NFL with 3,366 passing yards and eighth with 240.4 passing yards per game.

The biggest beneficiaries of Brissett's ascension to the starting job were wide receiver Michael Wilson and tight end Trey McBride. Wilson went from offensive afterthought to a 1,000-yard receiver, while McBride set the NFL record for single-season receptions by a tight end (126), among other NFL and franchise records. He's arguably the best tight end in the game.

The addition of 2026 third-round draft pick Carson Beck could loom large within the quarterbacks room. If things go sideways, like many expect, the Miami (Fla.) product could very well see the field sooner rather than later. After all, he does give the team an extra swing at the franchise-quarterback plate before the Cardinals potentially try their luck in 2027.

As for wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr., the spotlight is that much brighter heading into Year 3 after a disappointing Year 2 filled with inconsistency and missed time. Can an offensive-minded head coach get him back on track? How he fares in 2026 will be of vital importance to the franchise's future.

Running back, meanwhile, is one of the more crowded positions on the roster following an offseason that saw a new running back tandem come to town in rookie Jeremiyah Love, the No. 3 overall pick, and veteran Tyler Allgeier. James Conner is also back on a revised contract, and Bam Knight re-signed in free agency. There's also third-year pro Trey Benson. Tough decisions at the position are in the offing.

The group blocking in front of them also got some upgrades, with guard Isaac Seumalo filling a major need along the interior. The same goes for 2026 second-round pick Chase Bisontis. Both are expected to command starting roles alongside left tackle Paris Johnson Jr. and center Hjalte Froholdt. Right tackle, however, remains the line's biggest question mark. Elijah Wilkinson was brought in for a second stint and is the leader in the clubhouse at the position, as there's currently no significant competition.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Nick Rallis remains one of the few holdovers from the previous coaching staff. And boy, does he have a lot to prove in his return. Whether it be against the run or pass, Arizona was one of the worst defenses in the league last year. The floodgates opened from the midway point on, with the Cardinals allowing at least 37 points six times across the final nine games. Yes,

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 13	AT L.A. CHARGERS	4:25
SEPT. 20	**SEATTLE**	**4:25**
SEPT. 27	AT SAN FRANCISCO	4:05
OCT. 4	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
OCT. 11	**DETROIT**	**4:25**
OCT. 18	AT L.A. RAMS	4:05
OCT. 25	**DENVER**	**4:05**
NOV. 1	AT DALLAS	1:00
NOV. 8	AT SEATTLE	4:25
NOV. 15	**L.A. RAMS**	**4:05**
NOV. 22	AT KANSAS CITY	1:00
NOV. 29	**WASHINGTON**	**4:25**
DEC. 6	**PHILADELPHIA**	**4:05**
DEC. 13	BYE	
DEC. 20	**N.Y. JETS**	**4:05**
DEC. 27	AT NEW ORLEANS	1:00
JAN. 3	**LAS VEGAS**	**4:05**
TBD	**SAN FRANCISCO**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 NFC PLAYOFFS	11
2022	4
2023	4
2024	8
2025	3

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **MIKE LAFLEUR**
Record With Team: **FIRST SEASON**
Career Record: **FIRST SEASON**
Offensive Coordinator: **NATHANIEL HACKETT**
Defensive Coordinator: **NICK RALLIS**
Special Teams Coordinator: **MICHAEL GHOBRIAL**
Quarterbacks: **MATT SCHAUB**
Running Backs: **MATT MERRITT**
Wide Receivers: **TONY SORRENTINO**
Pass Game Specialist: **CONNOR SENGER**
Tight Ends: **JAKE MOORELAND**
Offensive Line: **JUSTIN FRYE**
Defensive Line: **PETE KWIATKOWSKI**
Inside Linebackers: **ROD WILSON**
Outside Linebackers: **MATT FEENEY**
Defensive Backs: **CRISTIAN GARCIA**
Cornerbacks: **ZAC ETHERIDGE**

TREY McBRIDE
TIGHT END

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

injuries played a part, but so did an inconsistent pass rush outside of Josh Sweat. While the veteran posted a career year in his first season with the Cardinals — 12 sacks and 13 tackles for a loss — the rest of the outside linebackers combined for just 5.5 sacks and 12 TFLs. If the Cardinals are going to have a chance in a brutally tough division, they must find someone who can be a consistent threat opposite Sweat.

As for the defensive line, it's missing a massive piece from a year ago in Calais Campbell. Second on the team behind only Sweat in sacks (6.5) and tackles for a loss (nine), the veteran was a leader in the locker room and primary contributor on the field. Campbell signed with the Baltimore Ravens in free agency, putting Arizona behind the eight ball even more. The team did bring back Roy Lopez, who should slide in at starting nose tackle. Jonah Williams is another veteran who could find his way into the starting lineup or an impactful rotational role. But it's more on recent first-rounders Walter Nolen III and Darius Robinson to take the necessary steps forward for this front to be successful. Robinson has shown flashes in two seasons of work, though he lacks consistency. Nolen's game has translated to the NFL in a big way, but he was on the field for only six games as a rookie due to a calf strain and torn meniscus. How he bounces back in Year 2 is anyone's guess. A potential surprise this year could be rookie defensive lineman Kaleb Proctor. The Southland Conference Player of the Year has impressive first-step quickness and was one of only two defensive players taken by the Cardinals this draft.

At inside linebacker, Mack Wilson Sr. returns for another season wearing the green dot after a rib injury ended his season eight games in. His likely running mate is Cody Simon, though free-agent signing Jack Gibbens could force his way into the conversation.

Viewed as one of the steals of the 2025 draft, Will Johnson enters Year 2 with a chance to cement himself as CB1. Denzel Burke and Starling Thomas V are options to start opposite Johnson on the outside. Sean Murphy-Bunting provides another option. The big question in the secondary: the health of nickel cornerback Garrett Williams. His status for 2026 is up in the air after a late-season Achilles tear. Losing him for any extended period of time would greatly impact the entire unit. Safety Budda Baker will also have a new running mate following Jalen Thompson's departure to the Dallas Cowboys in free agency. Dadrion "Rabbit" Taylor-Demerson is expected to be his replacement, though free-agent addition Andrew Wingard has prior NFL starting experience and could push for reps.

SPECIALISTS

There is a new long-snapper in town for the first time since 2016. With Aaron Brewer a free agent, the Cardinals opted for Casey Kreiter to take the reins. Most of the other specialists remain the same. Punter Blake Gillikin is back after a back injury cut his season to only five games. If he can stay healthy, the Cardinals have a real field-position weapon. Heading into 2026, he is averaging 48.5 yards per punt for his career, the best in NFL history. Placekicker Chad Ryland, although much more inconsistent in 2025, is also back. He has got some competition, though, with Joshua Karty also on the roster.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The rebuild will require some time and patience. While winning is the ultimate objective, laying a foundation under LaFleur and setting up the roster to compete in 2027 are much more realistic goals given the state of the franchise and the division the Cardinals occupy.

2025 RESULTS (3-14)

Sept. 7	**AT NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**20-13**
Sept. 14	**CAROLINA**	**W**	**27-22**
Sept. 21	at San Francisco	L	15-16
Sept. 25	Seattle	L	20-23
Oct. 5	Tennessee	L	21-22
Oct. 12	at Indianapolis	L	27-31
Oct. 19	Green Bay	L	23-27
Nov. 3	**AT DALLAS**	**W**	**27-17**
Nov. 9	at Seattle	L	22-44
Nov. 16	San Francisco	L	22-41
Nov. 23	Jacksonville (ot)	L	24-27
Nov. 30	at Tampa Bay	L	17-20
Dec. 7	L.A. Rams	L	17-45
Dec. 14	at Houston	L	20-40
Dec. 21	Atlanta	L	19-26
Dec. 28	at Cincinnati	L	14-37
Jan. 4	at L.A. Rams	L	20-37

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	325.8	19	10
RUSHING	93.1	31	16
PASSING	232.6	7	5
SCORING	20.9	23	12
THIRD DOWN %	41.5	9	4
POINTS/PLAY	0.331	25	14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	357.7	27	12
RUSHING	126.9	25	13
PASSING	230.8	24	12
SCORING	28.7	29	15
INTERCEPTIONS	10	T18	T9
SACKS	30	T28	T14
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.447	28	15
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-2	T15	T8

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
JACOBY BRISSETT	485	315	3,366	23	8
KYLER MURRAY	161	110	962	6	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
MICHAEL CARTER	92	333	3.6	1
EMARI DEMERCADO	44	312	7.1	0
BAM KNIGHT	82	269	3.3	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
TREY McBRIDE	126	1,239	9.8	11
MICHAEL WILSON	78	1,006	12.9	7
MARVIN HARRISON JR.	41	608	14.8	4
MICHAEL CARTER	33	267	8.1	0
ELIJAH HIGGINS	30	301	10.0	0

KICKING: Chad Ryland, 25-33 FGs, 36-36 PATs, 111 points; **TACKLES:** Budda Baker, 120; Akeem Davis-Gaither, 117; **SACKS:** Josh Sweat, 12.0; Calais Campbell, 6.5; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Denzel Burke, 3; Dadrion Taylor-Demerson, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

SIBLING RIVALRY **Mike LaFleur**'s brother Matt is the head coach of the Green Bay Packers and was in attendance for his younger brother's introductory press conference in Arizona. They mark only the third brotherly duo to serve as head coaches in the NFL at the same time, joining Jim and John Harbaugh and Jon and Jay Gruden.

STAR-STUDDED COUPLE Wide receiver Michael Wilson isn't the only pro athlete in his household. His wife, Sophia Wilson (formerly Smith), is a professional soccer player who won a gold medal with the U.S. at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. The pair now shares a daughter. No pressure on her!

ANOTHER ONE The Cardinals are on their fourth head coach since Bruce Arians left Arizona in 2017. Across the past 10 seasons, only former head coach Kliff Kingsbury posted a winning season — 11-6 in 2021. It's up to LaFleur to buck the franchise's trend of losing more often than not.

ATHLETIC AUTHOR On top of making defenses pay on the ground, through the air and in pass protection, Jeremiyah Love competes against fellow superhumans in his sports comic book "Jeremonstar," which blends sports and anime. Love was the creator and visionary, while his father, Jason, served as co-creator and provided the narrative foundation.

A PAIRING IN THE MAKING LaFleur and quarterback Gardner Minshew II go back a long way despite never linking up at the NFL level. The two connected during 2019 Senior Bowl prep in the form of a four-hour FaceTime call. "That's just how he's wired," LaFleur said of the veteran. As for what that added prep led to? Just one completed pass for four yards. Hopefully that's not the case in Arizona.

SCOUTING THE CARDINALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ARIZONA

"Mike LaFleur has his work cut out for him. Michael Bidwill isn't patient at all, and the roster is perpetually in bad shape. … LaFleur is viewed as smart and maybe he has a legit shot to turn these guys around. We'll see. … Trey McBride, nobody really has a tight end quite like him on their roster. Gets open, catches the ball great and can run. … Marvin Harrison Jr. hasn't lived up to high expectations yet, but there's still something there. … Kendrick Bourne is an underrated receiver who moves the chains. … Isaac Seumalo is a bit older guard, but he is well-preserved and as rough-and-tumble as it gets. … Chase Bisontis adds a nasty streak and zone-blocking ability to the interior line. … Not seeing the long-term quarterback play here obviously, but Jacoby Brissett isn't bad as a placeholder until they get their future solution in the building. … Jeremiyah Love brings a real home-run threat with wiggle, speed, tackle-breaking and great vision to the backfield. … Having Love and Tyler Allgeier should create balance for the offense. … Walter Nolen III has got everything it takes as a defensive lineman. … Hometown defensive tackle Roy Lopez is a tough dude. … Not thrilled with what I've seen from the linebackers. … Josh Sweat is an unconventional pass-rusher who puts heat on quarterbacks. … Will Johnson has been a great fit. … Budda Baker erases plays. … The Andrew Wingard signing flew under the radar, but he's a solid player."

ROB SCHUMACHER-ARIZONA REPUBLIC

2026 CARDINALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Brissett, Jacoby	QB	6-4	235	10	NC State	FA-NE-25	D3b-NE-16
15 Minshew II, Gardner	QB	6-1	225	5	Washington State	FA-KC-26	D6-Jac-19
12 Slovis, Kedon	QB	6-2	223	1	BYU	FA-25	FA-Ind-24

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Allgeier, Tyler	RB	5-10	225	4	BYU	FA-Atl-26	D5-Atl-22
33 Benson, Trey	RB	6-0	220	2	Florida State	D3a-24	D3a-Ari-24
6 Conner, James	RB	6-1	233	9	Pitt	FA-Pit-21	D3b-Pit-17
37 Kiner, Corey	RB	5-9	209	1	Cincinnati	PS-Min-25	FA-SF-25
20 Knight, Bam	RB	5-11	210	2	NC State	FA-25	FA-NYJ-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Bourne, Kendrick	WR	6-1	190	9	Eastern Washington	FA-SF-26	FA-SF-17
86 Brooks, Jalen	WR	6-2	205	3	South Carolina	FA-25	D7-Dal-23
81 Duvernay, Devin	WR	5-11	202	6	Texas	FA-Chi-26	D3b-Bal-20
45 Fairweather, Rivaldo	TE	6-3	249	1	Auburn	PS-Dal-25	FA-Dal-25
80 Fehoko, Simi	WR	6-4	225	5	Stanford	FA-LAC-25	D5-Dal-21
39 Green, Bryson	WR	6-1	207	1	Wisconsin	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
18 Harrison Jr., Marvin	WR	6-3	220	2	Ohio State	D1a-24	D1a-Ari-24
84 Higgins, Elijah	TE	6-3	245	3	Stanford	W-Mia-23	D6-Mia-23
85 McBride, Trey	TE	6-4	246	4	Colorado State	D2-22	D2-Ari-22
83 Palmer, Tejhaun	WR	6-1	210	1	UAB	D6-24	D6-Ari-24
47 Quitoriano, Teagan	TE	6-6	259	4	Oregon State	FA-Atl-26	D5b-Hou-22
87 Reiman, Tip	TE	6-5	271	2	Illinois	D3c-24	D3c-Ari-24
9 Smith-Marsette, Ihmir	WR	6-1	185	5	Iowa	FA-26	D5-Min-21
89 Weaver, Xavier	WR	6-0	185	1	Colorado	FA-24	FA-Ari-24
14 Wilson, Michael	WR	6-2	213	3	Stanford	D3b-23	D3b-Ari-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74 Adams, Isaiah	OL	6-4	315	2	Illinois	D3b-24	D3b-Ari-24
67 Byers, Jeremiah	OL	6-4	320	1	Florida State	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
58 Conner, Hayden	OL	6-5	315	1	Texas	D6-25	D6-Ari-25
72 Froholdt, Hjalte	OL	6-5	310	6	Arkansas	FA-Cle-23	D4-NE-19
78 Fryar, Josh	OL	6-5	320	1	Ohio State	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
71 Gaines II, Jon	OL	6-4	315	2	UCLA	D4-23	D4-Ari-23
67 Jacobs, Demontrey	OL	6-6	315	2	South Florida	FA-25	FA-Den-23
70 Johnson Jr., Paris	OL	6-6	325	3	Ohio State	D1-23	D1-Ari-23
75 Jones, Christian	OL	6-5	320	1	Texas	D5b-24	D5b-Ari-24
76 Pryor, Matt	OL	6-7	332	8	TCU	FA-Phi-26	D6-Phi-18
69 Senn, Valentin	OL	6-7	310	1	UConn	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
73 Seumalo, Isaac	OL	6-4	303	10	Oregon State	FA-Pit-26	D3-Phi-16
68 Udoh, Oli	OL	6-6	320	7	Elon	FA-Ten-26	D6c-Min-19
65 Wilkinson, Elijah	OL	6-6	310	8	UMass	FA-Atl-26	FA-Den-17

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Billings, Andrew	DL	6-1	340	9	Baylor	FA-Chi-26	D4-Cin-16
90 Carter, Zachary	DL	6-4	301	4	Florida	FA-25	D3-Cin-22
91 Collier, L.J.	DL	6-2	300	6	TCU	FA-Sea-23	D1-Sea-19
51 Lopez, Roy	DL	6-2	312	5	Arizona	FA-Det-26	D6-Hou-21
79 Mustipher, P.J.	DL	6-4	320	2	Penn State	FA-24	FA-Den-23
97 Nolen III, Walter	DL	6-4	300	1	Ole Miss	D1-25	D1-Ari-25
56 Robinson, Darius	DL	6-5	285	2	Missouri	D1b-24	D1b-Ari-24
55 Stills, Dante	DL	6-4	300	3	West Virginia	D6b-23	D6b-Ari-23
92 Williams, Jonah	DL	6-5	275	5	Weber State	FA-NO-26	FA-LAR-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
41 Brown, Elliott	LB	6-5	245	1	Virginia	FA-25	FA-Ari-25
5 Browning, Baron	LB	6-3	255	5	Ohio State	T-Den-24	D3b-Den-21
52 Burch, Jordan	LB	6-4	280	1	Oregon	D3-25	D3-Ari-25
25 Collins, Zaven	LB	6-4	270	5	Tulsa	D1-21	D1-Ari-21
50 Gibbens, Jack	LB	6-3	242	4	Minnesota	FA-NE-26	FA-Ten-22
53 Keys, Austin	LB	6-2	244	1	Auburn	W-Min-26	FA-Min-25
54 Leota, Eku	LB	6-4	257	2	Auburn	FA-25	FA-Car-23
9 Ojulari, BJ	LB	6-2	248	2	LSU	D2-23	D2-Ari-23
44 Pappoe, Owen	LB	6-0	230	3	Auburn	D5b-23	D5b-Ari-23
0 Simon, Cody	LB	6-2	230	1	Ohio State	D4-25	D4-Ari-25
10 Sweat, Josh	LB	6-5	265	8	Florida State	FA-Phi-25	D4b-Phi-18
1 Wilson Sr., Mack	LB	6-1	240	7	Alabama	FA-NE-24	D5a-Cle-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Baker, Budda	S	5-10	195	9	Washington	D2-17	D2-Ari-17
32 Blount, Joey	S	6-1	195	4	Virginia	FA-23	FA-Sea-22
29 Burke, Denzel	CB	5-11	190	1	Ohio State	D5-25	D5-Ari-25
13 Clark, Kei'Trel	CB	5-10	181	3	Louisville	D6a-23	D6a-Ari-23
36 Crawford, Kitan	S	5-11	202	1	Nevada	D7-25	D7-Ari-25
39 Davis, Jaden	CB	5-10	182	1	Miami (Fla.)	D7-24	D7-Ari-24
2 Johnson, Will	CB	6-2	200	1	Michigan	D2-25	D2-Ari-25
28 Jones, Elijah	CB	6-1	185	1	Boston College	D3d-24	D3d-Ari-24
35 King, Kalen	CB	5-11	190	1	Penn State	PS-Car-25	D7-GB-24
16 Melton, Max	CB	5-11	187	2	Rutgers	D2-24	D2-Ari-24
23 Murphy-Bunting, S.	CB	6-0	195	7	Central Michigan	FA-Ten-24	D2-TB-19
42 Taylor-Demerson, D.	S	5-10	197	2	Texas Tech	D4-24	D4-Ari-24
24 Thomas V, Starling	CB	5-10	194	3	UAB	W-Det-23	FA-Det-23
21 Williams, Garrett	CB	5-10	192	3	Syracuse	D3a-23	D3a-Ari-23
27 Wingard, Andrew	S	6-0	200	7	Wyoming	FA-Jac-26	FA-Jac-19

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Gillikin, Blake	P	6-2	196	5	Penn State	FA-23	FA-NO-20
98 Karty, Joshua	K	6-2	212	2	Stanford	PS-LAR-25	D6b-LAR-24
59 Kreiter, Casey	LS	6-1	250	10	Iowa	FA-NYG-26	FA-Dal-14
38 Ryland, Chad	K	6-0	195	3	Maryland	FA-24	D4-NE-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	18	Marvin Harrison Jr.	89	Xavier Weaver
WR	14	Michael Wilson	81	Devin Duvernay
WR	17	Kendrick Bourne	82	Reggie Virgil (R)
LT	70	Paris Johnson Jr.	67	Demontrey Jacobs
LG	73	Isaac Seumalo	71	Jon Gaines II
C	72	Hjalte Froholdt	58	Hayden Conner
RG	57	Chase Bisontis (R)	74	Isaiah Adams
RT	65	Elijah Wilkinson	78	Josh Fryar
TE	85	Trey McBride	87	Tip Reiman
QB	7	Jacoby Brissett	15	Gardner Minshew II
RB	4	Jeremiyah Love (R)	22	Tyler Allgeier

DEFENSE

DT	97	Walter Nolen III	95	Andrew Billings
NT	51	Roy Lopez	94	Kaleb Proctor (R)
DT	56	Darius Robinson	55	Dante Stills
OLB	10	Josh Sweat	52	Jordan Burch
ILB	1	Mack Wilson Sr.	50	Jack Gibbens
ILB	0	Cody Simon	44	Owen Pappoe
OLB	25	Zaven Collins	5	Baron Browning
CB	2	Will Johnson	24	Starling Thomas V
CB	21	Garrett Williams	29	Denzel Burke
S	3	Budda Baker	36	Kitan Crawford
S	42	Dadrion Taylor-Demerson	27	Andrew Wingard

SPECIALISTS

K	38	Chad Ryland	KR	81	Devin Duvernay
P	12	Blake Gillikin	PR	81	Devin Duvernay

21.2%

Opposing defenses blitzed the Cardinals on a league-low 21.2% of dropbacks.

DRAFT CLASS GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Jeremiyah Love	RB	6-0	214	Notre Dame
2	Chase Bisontis	G	6-6	330	Texas A&M
3	Carson Beck	QB	6-4	233	Miami (Fla.)
4	Kaleb Proctor	DL	6-2	295	SE Louisiana
5	Reggie Virgil	WR	6-2	187	Texas Tech
6	Karson Sharar	LB	6-1	231	Iowa
7	Jayden Williams	OT	6-4	307	Ole Miss

Arizona pulled off the big move of the first round in drafting Jeremiyah Love with the No. 3 overall pick. He instantly moves to the top of the RB food chain and gives new head coach Matt LaFleur another weapon to utilize. Potentially just as impactful to the overall success of the offense was the Cardinals' second-round pick of Chase Bisontis. He has the chance to start from Day 1 at a position of need. Carson Beck could earn a handful of starts by season's end, as Arizona continues to search for its next franchise quarterback. A potentially sneaky pick is Kaleb Proctor, who could find himself in the conversation for rotational snaps early.

LA RAMS

NFC WEST FORECAST

2

This offseason had all the early hallmarks of a Rams team gearing up to take big swing after big swing in pursuit of another Super Bowl. By trading for All-Pro corner Trent McDuffie, signing him to a record-breaking contract extension and adding Jaylen Watson in the opening hours of free agency, the Rams mirrored their first all-in moves from before the 2021 Super Bowl run — the acquisitions of cornerbacks Jalen Ramsey and Marcus Peters.

So when the NFL Draft rolled around, there was an expectation that general manager Les Snead would double down. He had, after all, promised an aggressive approach when reigning league MVP Matthew Stafford opted to return for an 18th season. Instead, the Rams zagged and drafted Stafford's eventual successor, Alabama quarterback Ty Simpson.

So the Rams appear to be attempting to do what the NBA's Golden State Warriors tried and failed to do — to work in two different timelines, one with Stafford's window and another with Simpson in mind. Whether they can accomplish that tricky balancing act remains to be seen. But there is a sense around the franchise that — with their quarterback of the future in hand — they can be less protective about future first-round picks at the trade deadline.

OFFENSE

The Rams return 10 starters from an offense that led the NFL in scoring, helped Stafford to his first career MVP award and boosted wide receivers Puka Nacua and Davante Adams to the NFL lead in receptions and receiving touchdowns, respectively.

The Rams also return all four tight ends from a team that ran twice as many snaps with 13-personnel — three tight ends, one wide receiver, one running back — as any other team in the NFL. And it appears that the Rams are gearing up to try to build on that success after selecting a tight end — Ohio State's Max Klare — in the second round of the draft for a second consecutive season.

The package helped both their rushing and passing attacks in 2025. The attention paid to defend the run against the heavy personnel opened up one-on-one matchups, particularly in the red zone, for Adams, an expert at beating man coverage. The Rams installed 13-personnel midseason, so a full offseason of planning around the scheme should enable head coach Sean McVay and newly promoted offensive coordinator Nate Scheelhaase the opportunity to expand on what the Rams did in 2025.

On the ground, the Rams have found a lot of success with the pairing of running backs Kyren Williams and Blake Corum. The Rams will continue to split carries between the two, expecting the lessened workload to make Williams more explosive when he does carry the ball.

But the matter of the most concern for the Rams offense — and perhaps for the team as a whole — is the controversy that has swirled around Nacua, the All-Pro wide receiver who has come under the microscope for his actions off the field. After a lawsuit alleging that he bit a woman during a night out, followed by a stint in a rehabilitation center, Nacua reported to Woodland Hills for the start of the Rams' offseason program. He remains at the heart of everything the Rams are trying to do on offense, but it's unclear if the team will sign him to what could be a record-breaking contract extension as he enters the final year of his rookie deal.

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 10	**SAN FRANCISCO** (MELBOURNE)	**8:35**
SEPT. 21	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**8:15**
SEPT. 27	AT DENVER	8:20
OCT. 4	AT PHILADELPHIA	1:00
OCT. 12	**BUFFALO**	**8:15**
OCT. 18	**ARIZONA**	**4:05**
OCT. 25	AT LAS VEGAS	4:25
NOV. 1	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**4:05**
NOV. 8	AT WASHINGTON	1:00
NOV. 15	AT ARIZONA	4:05
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 25	**GREEN BAY**	**8:00**
DEC. 3	**KANSAS CITY**	**8:15**
DEC. 13	AT SAN FRANCSICO	4:25
DEC. 20	**DALLAS**	**4:25**
DEC. 25	AT SEATTLE	8:15
TBD	AT TAMPA BAY	
TBD	**SEATTLE**	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	SUPER BOWL CHAMPION	12
2022		5
2023	NFC PLAYOFFS	10
2024	NFC PLAYOFFS	10
2025	NFC PLAYOFFS	12

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **SEAN McVAY**
Record With Team: **92-57**
Career Record: **92-57**
Offensive Coordinator: **NATE SCHEELHAASE**
Defensive Coordinator: **CHRIS SHULA**
Special Teams Coordinator: **BUBBA VENTRONE**
Assistant Head Coach: **KLIFF KINGSBURY**
Assoc. Coordinator/QBs: **DAVE RAGONE**
Running Backs: **RON GOULD**
Wide Receivers: **ROB CALABRESE**
Tight Ends: **SCOTT HUFF**
Offensive Line: **RYAN WENDELL**
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: **GIFF SMITH**
Inside Linebackers: **GREG WILLIAMS**
Outside Linebackers: **JOE CONIGLIO**
Pass Rush Coordinator: **DREW WILKINS**
Pass Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **JIMMY LAKE**
Safeties: **CHRIS BEAKE**

PUKA NACUA
WIDE RECEIVER

CARY EDMONDSON-IMAGN IMAGES

DEFENSE

The Rams' two big veteran acquisitions this offseason — McDuffie and Watson — represented a clear desire to upgrade their biggest weakness from 2025, the cornerback room. But the Rams didn't just try to improve the talent at the position; they also signed players who will play corner in a fundamentally different way.

McDuffie and Watson both came up in the system of Kansas City Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo. They learned to play the position physically, in press at the line of scrimmage and at the point of the catch. More importantly, they play tough in the run game, lowering their shoulders and shedding blocks to make stops. After a year getting killed by outside-zone runs, the Rams needed corners like McDuffie and Watson to set a tone in those situations.

The Rams hope that improved secondary play will unlock a pass rush that regressed in 2025. Outside linebacker Jared Verse draws a lot of double-teams and chip blocks and creates space for teammates Byron Young, Kobie Turner and Braden Fiske. But he needs to work on closing out his own sack opportunities if he's going to become the game-changer the Rams expected when they drafted him 19th overall in 2024. He also needs to improve against double-teams because the likelihood is that he will face those kinds of looks for the rest of his career.

The Rams will also need some more consistent play out of their inside linebackers. Nate Landman and Omar Speights both specialize in the run game, but their struggles during the playoffs put them under a microscope entering the offseason. The Rams' only move to improve the position was a two-year, $4.45 million deal for special-teams ace Grant Stuard. But he might have a window to compete for Speights' role.

SPECIALISTS

Placekicking was a disaster in the early parts of last season for the Rams, costing them two wins. But Harrison Mevis came in and fixed that issue, marking 12-of-13 field-goal attempts and all 39 of his extra-point tries. The Rams trust Mevis moving forward, both for his accuracy and distance, and they brought in veteran long-snapper Joe Cardona to shore up the operation. Punter Ethan Evans continues to provide steady leg strength and directionality.

The Rams hired new special teams coordinator Bubba Ventrone this offseason, hoping to fix a special teams unit that gave up big returns and didn't get much traction in the return game. If the Rams do decide to keep five tight ends on their roster, it would provide the team with more mobile bodies who can block on dynamic kickoff returns.

Xavier Smith will compete to retain his job returning punts after his critical fumble in the NFC Championship Game. Jordan Whittington and Corum haven't been explosive in kickoff returns, but the Rams did not bring in any competition for them.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Rams are mostly returning the same roster that lost in the NFC title game to the Seattle Seahawks in January. Outside of the upgrades at cornerback, they return 19 of 22 starters in an effort to win their second Super Bowl in six seasons, this one scheduled for their home SoFi Stadium — just like after the 2021 season. It's a big statement of confidence in what the organization had built prior to this offseason, just like the future-first approach to the draft. But if the team falls short of blue and yellow confetti in February, they may come to regret that two-timeline philosophy.

2025 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 7	**HOUSTON**	**W**	**14-9**
Sept. 14	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**33-19**
Sept. 21	at Philadelphia	L	26-33
Sept. 28	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**27-20**
Oct. 2	San Francisco (ot)	L	23-26
Oct. 12	**AT BALTIMORE**	**W**	**17-3**
Oct. 19	**AT JACKSONVILLE**	**W**	**35-7**
Nov. 2	**NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**34-10**
Nov. 9	**AT SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**42-26**
Nov. 16	**SEATTLE**	**W**	**21-19**
Nov. 23	**TAMPA BAY**	**W**	**34-7**
Nov. 30	at Carolina	L	28-31
Dec. 7	**AT ARIZONA**	**W**	**45-17**
Dec. 14	**DETROIT**	**W**	**41-34**
Dec. 18	at Seattle (ot)	L	37-38
Dec. 29	at Atlanta	L	24-27
Jan. 4	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**37-20**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 10	**AT CAROLINA**	**W**	**34-31**
Jan. 18	**AT CHICAGO (OT)**	**W**	**20-17**
Jan. 25	at Seattle	L	27-31

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	394.6	1	1
RUSHING	126.6	7	4
PASSING	268.1	1	1
SCORING	30.5	1	1
THIRD DOWN %	39.6	17	9
POINTS/PLAY	0.463	2	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	327.5	17	8
RUSHING	110.8	12	4
PASSING	216.7	19	9
SCORING	20.4	10	4
INTERCEPTIONS	16	T6	T3
SACKS	47	T7	T4
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.332	9	4
TO DIFFERENTIAL	+11	5	2

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
MATTHEW STAFFORD	597	388	4,707	46	8

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
KYREN WILLIAMS	259	1,252	4.8	10
BLAKE CORUM	145	746	5.1	6

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
PUKA NACUA	129	1,715	13.3	10
DAVANTE ADAMS	60	789	13.2	14
COLBY PARKINSON	43	408	9.5	8
KYREN WILLIAMS	36	281	7.8	3
TYLER HIGBEE	25	281	11.2	3
DAVIS ALLEN	24	208	8.7	3

KICKING: Harrison Mevis, 12-13 FGs, 39-39 PATs, 75 points; Joshua Karty, 10-15 FGs, 23-26 PATs, 53 points

TACKLES: Nathan Landman, 132; Kam Curl, 122

SACKS: Byron Young, 12.0; Jared Verse, 7.5

INTERCEPTIONS: Emmanuel Forbes Jr., 3; Cobie Durant, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

LINKS LEADER Since Davante Adams' arrival, his influence has loomed large in the Rams' locker room. Lately, his love of golf has rubbed off on the rest of the team's wide receivers, with Puka Nacua leading the group on offseason golf outings.

STEVEN BISIG-IMAGN IMAGES

WALKING TALL This past year, the defensive line room — led by **Kobie Turner** — started doing "grounding walks," barefooted strolls across the grass fields to reset after practices. It remains to be seen if Turner will have the time and energy for such leisurely pursuits after welcoming his first child — a baby girl — with wife Alyssa in March.

GOODBYE TO BIG ROB With Rob Havenstein's retirement, David Quessenberry has taken over the point system in the Rams offensive line room and will be in charge of awarding and subtracting arbitrary points to and from his teammates. Another unusual result of Havenstein's departure: It is unclear at this time who retained custody of the plant that Havenstein and tight end Tyler Higbee have cared for between their lockers the last two years. Higbee, by the way, is now the last Ram who predates McVay's 10-year tenure as head coach following Havenstein's retirement.

REUNITED Trent McDuffie's arrival is not only a homecoming for the former St. John Bosco High standout, but also a reunion with his former collegiate head coach, Jimmy Lake, now serving as the Rams' cornerbacks coach. Lake has retained a relationship with McDuffie and his parents since their days together at the University of Washington, so it should be a fast reacclimation period between the two.

BIG CATCH With the Rams set to open the season in Melbourne, right guard Kevin Dotson visited Australia during the offseason to go on a fishing trip. He caught a broadnose sevengill shark on the trip that he called the biggest of his fishing career, a redemptive moment for him after catching nothing during a trip to Maui for minicamp last summer.

SCOUTING THE RAMS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES

"They drafted the likely successor for Matthew Stafford: Ty Simpson. Simpson was kind of a secret pursuit for the Rams. And head coach Sean McVay's reaction to the selection was intended obviously to show support for Stafford, his guy. At some point, it will be Simpson's day, but that day is not today. Stafford remains strong-armed and accurate. … Rough offseason for gifted receiver Puka Nacua. Hearing him going to rehab was beneficial. Hopefully, he's putting his issues behind him and has a sound plan going forward. … Trading Davante Adams never made sense to most around the league. They briefly entertained the idea and they moved on. … Steve Avila is a keeper at left guard. And Kevin Dotson is a road-grader on the right side. … Can't say I love their tackle situation. …Good tight end tandem of Colby Parkinson and Tyler Higbee. … Kyren Williams is a strong running back. The depth behind him is just OK. … One of the best defensive lines in the game, especially Jared Verse and Braden Fiske. Their paydays are coming. … Byron Young is a talent, too. … Nate Landman's ability to punch the football out is a real skill. … Omar Speights is underrated. … Kam Curl makes this defense go. … Trent McDuffie should allow the Rams to win a lot of matchups all over the field. … Grant Stuard will boost the kick coverage. He plays like his hair is on fire."

2026 RAMS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Bennett IV, Stetson	QB	5-11	192	2	Georgia	D4-23	D4-LAR-23
9 Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	214	17	Georgia	T-Det-21	D1a-Det-09

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24 Corum, Blake	RB	5-8	202	2	Michigan	D3a-24	D3a-LAR-24
27 Hunter, Jarquez	RB	5-10	211	1	Auburn	D4-25	D4-LAR-25
20 Rivers, Ronnie	RB	5-9	198	4	Fresno State	FA-25	FA-Ari-22
32 Waters, Jordan	RB	6-0	225	1	Duke	FA-26	FA-LAR-25
23 Williams, Kyren	RB	5-9	207	4	Notre Dame	D5-22	D5-LAR-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Adams, Davante	WR	6-1	204	12	Fresno State	FA-NYJ-25	D2-GB-14
87 Allen, Davis	TE	6-6	253	3	Clemson	D5c-23	D5c-LAR-23
82 Edwards, Tru	WR	6-3	211	1	Louisiana Tech	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
18 Ferguson, Terrance	TE	6-5	252	1	Oregon	D2-25	D2-LAR-25
89 Higbee, Tyler	TE	6-6	253	10	WKU	D4a-16	D4a-LAR-16
15 Mumpfield, Konata	WR	6-1	188	1	Pitt	D7-25	D7-LAR-25
12 Nacua, Puka	WR	6-2	216	3	BYU	D5d-23	D5d-LAR-23
84 Parkinson, Colby	TE	6-7	266	6	Stanford	FA-Sea-24	D4a-Sea-20
81 Presley, Brennan	WR	5-8	174	1	Oklahoma State	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
83 Redman, Mark	TE	6-5	258	1	Louisville	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
86 Scott, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	3	Cincinnati	FA-25	D4-Chi-23
19 Smith, Xavier	WR	5-9	180	2	Florida A&M	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
88 Whittington, Jordan	WR	6-1	202	2	Texas	D6c-24	D6c-LAR-24
14 Williams, Mario	WR	5-9	178	1	Tulane	FA-26	FA-LAR-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
61 Arcuri, AJ	OL	6-7	312	2	Michigan State	FA-25	D7c-LAR-22
73 Avila, Steve	OL	6-3	332	3	TCU	D2-23	D2-LAR-23
60 Bowles, Wyatt	OL	6-5	300	1	Utah State	FA-26	FA-LAR-25
67 Dedich, Justin	OL	6-2	296	2	USC	FA-24	FA-LAR-24
69 Dotson, Kevin	OL	6-4	328	6	Louisiana	T-Pit-23	D4b-Pit-20
77 Jackson, Alaric	OL	6-7	338	5	Iowa	FA-21	FA-LAR-21
50 Limmer, Beaux	OL	6-5	318	2	Arkansas	D6d-24	D6d-LAR-24
71 McClendon Jr., Warren	OL	6-4	315	3	Georgia	D5b-23	D5b-LAR-23
63 McMahon, Dylan	OL	6-3	290	2	NC State	FA-25	D6-Phi-24
68 Quessenberry, David	OL	6-5	310	8	San José State	FA-25	D6-Hou-13
65 Shelton, Coleman	OL	6-5	292	7	Washington	FA-Chi-25	FA-LAR-19

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Davis, Tyler	DE	6-2	306	2	Clemson	D6a-24	D6a-LAR-24
55 Fiske, Braden	DE	6-5	294	2	Florida State	D2-24	D2-LAR-24
95 Ford, Poona	NT	5-11	314	8	Texas	FA-LAC-25	FA-Sea-18
57 Hamilton, Ty	DL	6-3	301	1	Ohio State	D5a-25	D5a-LAR-25
94 Johnson, Desjuan	DE	6-3	278	3	Toledo	D7c-23	D7c-LAR-23
52 Murchison, Larrell	DE	6-2	295	5	NC State	FA-22	D5-Ten-20
97 Norton, Bill	DL	6-6	336	1	Texas	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
91 Turner, Kobie	DE	6-2	294	3	Wake Forest	D3-23	D3-LAR-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Dolac, Shaun	ILB	6-1	222	1	Buffalo	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
53 Landman, Nate	ILB	6-3	234	4	Colorado	FA-Atl-25	FA-Atl-22
45 Muhammad, Jamil	OLB	6-1	262	1	USC	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
58 Neal, Elias	ILB	6-0	221	2	Marshall	FA-25	FA-LAR-24
48 Speights, Omar	ILB	6-1	234	2	LSU	FA-24	FA-LAR-24
10 Stewart, Josaiah	OLB	6-1	251	1	Michigan	D3-25	D3-LAR-25
44 Stuard, Grant	ILB	5-11	225	5	Houston	FA-Det-26	D7b-TB-21
96 Thomas II, Keir	OLB	6-2	260	3	Florida State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
8 Verse, Jared	OLB	6-4	265	2	Florida State	D1-24	D1-LAR-24
0 Young, Byron	OLB	6-2	260	3	Tennessee	D3a-23	D3a-LAR-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Curl, Kam	S	6-2	207	6	Arkansas	FA-Was-24	D7a-Was-20
1 Forbes Jr., Emmanuel	CB	6-0	173	3	Mississippi State	W-Was-24	D1-Was-23
34 Ingle, Tanner	S	5-8	186	1	NC State	FA-25	FA-LAR-23
Johnson, Alex	CB	6-0	185	1	UCLA	FA-25	FA-NYG-24
5 Kinchens, Kamren	S	6-0	201	2	Miami (Fla.)	D3b-24	D3b-LAR-24
37 Lake, Quentin	S	6-1	204	4	UCLA	D6a-22	D6a-LAR-22
33 Lampkin, Cam	CB	5-11	174	2	Washington State	FA-25	FA-LAR-24
2 McCollough, Jaylen	S	6-0	211	2	Tennessee	FA-24	FA-LAR-24
22 McDuffie, Trent	CB	5-11	193	4	Washington	T-KC-26	D1a-KC-22
43 Valcarcel, Nate	S	6-1	194	1	Northern Illinois	FA-25	FA-LAR-25
30 Wallace, Josh	CB	6-0	190	2	Michigan	FA-24	FA-LAR-24
35 Watson, Jaylen	CB	6-2	197	4	Washington State	FA-KC-26	D7a-KC-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49 Cardona, Joe	LS	6-2	241	11	Navy	FA-Mia-26	D5-NE-15
42 Evans, Ethan	P	6-3	253	3	Wingate	D7a-23	D7a-LAR-23
92 Mevis, Harrison	K	6-0	245	1	Missouri	FA-25	FA-Car-24

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Davante Adams	15	Konata Mumpfield
WR	12	Puka Nacua	88	Jordan Whittington
WR	19	Xavier Smith	6	CJ Daniels (R)
LT	77	Alaric Jackson	68	David Quessenberry
LG	73	Steve Avila	67	Justin Dedich
C	65	Coleman Shelton	50	Beaux Limmer
RG	69	Kevin Dotson	67	Justin Dedich
RT	71	Warren McClendon Jr.	79	Keagen Trost (R)
TE	84	Colby Parkinson	18	Terrance Ferguson
QB	9	Matthew Stafford	15	Ty Simpson (R)
RB	23	Kyren Williams	24	Blake Corum

DEFENSE

DE	55	Braden Fiske	52	Larrell Murchison
NT	95	Poona Ford	57	Ty Hamilton
DE	91	Kobie Turner	94	Desjuan Johnson
OLB	8	Jared Verse	10	Josaiah Stewart
LB	53	Nate Landman	56	Shaun Dolac
LB	48	Omar Speights	44	Grant Stuard
OLB	0	Byron Young	96	Keir Thomas II
CB	22	Trent McDuffie	1	Emmanuel Forbes Jr.
CB	35	Jaylen Watson	30	Josh Wallace
S	37	Quentin Lake	5	Kamren Kinchens
S	3	Kam Curl	2	Jaylen McCollough

SPECIALISTS

K	92	Harrison Mevis	KR	88	Jordan Whittington
P	42	Ethan Evans	PR	19	Xavier Smith

50.6%, 49.7%

Kyren Williams (50.6%) and Blake Corum (49.7%) both finished in the top three among qualified backs in success percentage per NFL Next Gen Stats.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: D

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Ty Simpson	QB	6-1	211	Alabama
2	Max Klare	TE	6-4	246	Ohio State
3	Keagen Trost	OL	6-4	311	Missouri
6	CJ Daniels	WR	6-2	202	Miami (Fla.)
7	Tim Keenan III	DT	6-1	327	Alabama

CJ Daniels was the only pick the Rams made who addressed present-day needs, but as a sixth-round pick, he'll have ground to make up in the third-receiver battle. Otherwise, this class was future-focused. Keagen Trost's versatility — the Rams believe he can play all five line positions — will make him a valuable reserve in 2026. Ty Simpson will develop while running the second-team and scout offenses in practice barring an injury to incumbent quarterback Matthew Stafford.

SF 49ERS

NFC WEST FORECAST
3

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 10	**L.A. RAMS (MELBOURNE)**	**8:35**
SEPT. 20	**MIAMI**	**4:25**
SEPT. 27	**ARIZONA**	**4:05**
OCT. 4	**DENVER**	**4:25**
OCT. 11	AT SEATTLE	4:25
OCT. 19	**WASHINGTON**	**8:15**
OCT. 25	AT ATLANTA	1:00
NOV. 1	BYE	
NOV. 8	**LAS VEGAS**	**4:05**
NOV. 15	AT DALLAS	4:25
NOV. 22	**MINNESOTA (MEXICO CITY)**	**8:20**
NOV. 29	**SEATTLE**	**4:25**
DEC. 6	AT N.Y. GIANTS	1:00
DEC. 13	**L.A. RAMS**	**4:25**
DEC. 17	AT L.A. CHARGERS	8:15
DEC. 27	AT KANSAS CITY	4:25
JAN. 3	**PHILADELPHIA**	**8:20**
TBD	AT ARIZONA	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021 NFC PLAYOFFS	10
2022 NFC PLAYOFFS	13
2023 SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	12
2024	6
2025 NFC PLAYOFFS	12

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **KYLE SHANAHAN**
Record With Team: **82-67**
Career Record: **82-67**
Offensive Coordinator: **KLAY KUBIAK**
Defensive Coordinator: **RAHEEM MORRIS**
Special Teams Coordinator: **BRANT BOYER**
Quarterbacks: **MICK LOMBARDI**
Running Backs: **ROBERT TURNER JR.**
Wide Receivers/Passing Game Specialist: **LEONARD HANKERSON**
Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Line: **CHRIS FOERSTER**
Assistant Head Coach of Defense: **GUS BRADLEY**
Defensive Line: **KRIS KOCUREK**
Linebackers: **JOHNNY HOLLAND**
Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks: **RAY BROWN**

The 2025 49ers were expected to have a reset season. Instead? They returned to the playoffs.

The 49ers' 12-5 campaign, which included a wild-card upset of the Eagles in Philadelphia, came after a cost-cutting roster cleanout that claimed eight starters and lowered expectations. Their fifth 10-win season since 2019 was even more impressive considering that they were mostly without their two All-Pro defensive players, edge rusher Nick Bosa and linebacker Fred Warner, who were lost to early-season injuries.

Last year's success in the face of adversity has fueled optimism that the Niners' quest to end the proud franchise's 31-season title drought is realistic in 2026. Bosa and Warner will return, and the roster includes Pro Bowl quarterback Brock Purdy and an impressive All-Pro supporting cast: running back Christian McCaffrey, left tackle Trent Williams, wide receiver Mike Evans, tight end George Kittle and fullback Kyle Juszczyk, all of whom will be 30 or older by Week 1. The 49ers' age, coupled with a series of underwhelming recent draft classes, means that their title window could be closing soon. General manager John Lynch believes the veteran group has at least one more run in it.

"We've got a core group of players that are outstanding players, outstanding workers," Lynch says. "Are some of them aging? Sure. But they're still playing really good football."

OFFENSE

The 49ers are returning nine starters from a unit that ranked among the NFL's top 10 in both yards and points. And they've upgraded at one of their empty spots by replacing Jauan Jennings with Evans, a six-time Pro Bowl pick and 1,000-yard machine who signed a team-friendly deal in March.

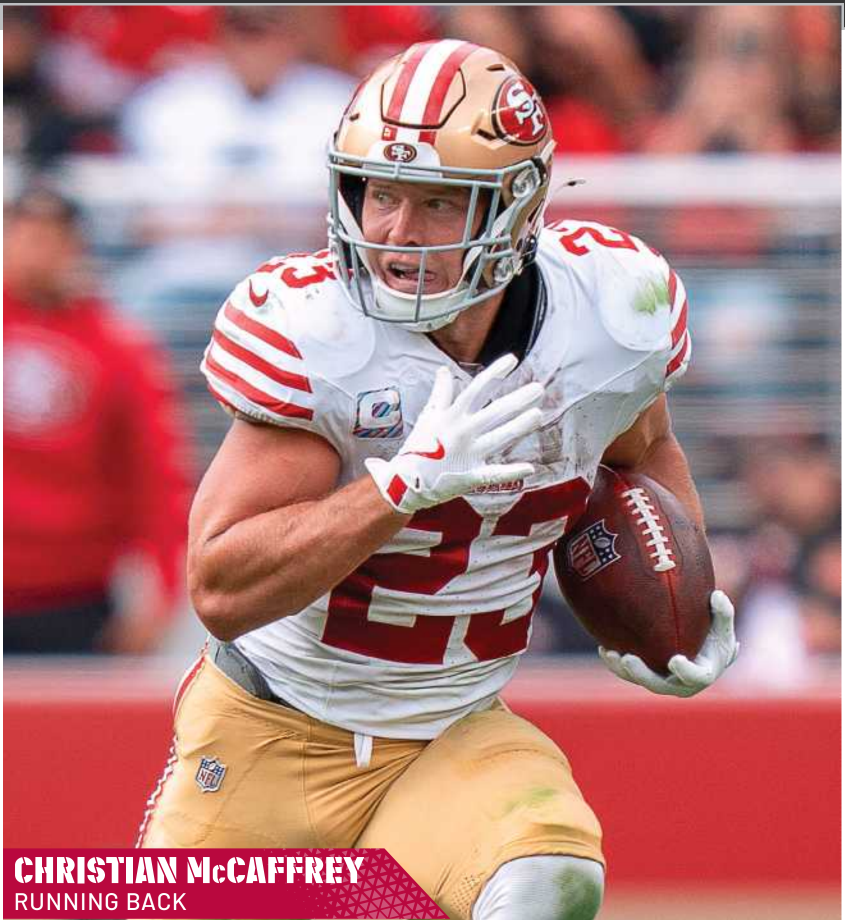
Evans took less money to join a title contender. And the 49ers' QB situation was part of his calculation. Purdy ranks second in the NFL in passer rating (104.0) among QBs with a minimum of 1,000 attempts since 2022, and the 49ers might possess the NFL's best backup in Mac Jones, who went 5-3 last year in his starts and ranked second in the league in completion percentage (69.6).

The QBs are surrounded by a plethora of stars who are going toe-to-toe with Father Time. McCaffrey, entering his age-30 season, was fourth in MVP voting after finishing 76 receiving yards shy of becoming the first player in history to have two seasons with 1,000 yards both rushing and receiving. Kittle, entering his 10th season, earned his seventh Pro Bowl berth despite missing six games. Left tackle Trent Williams, in season No. 16, signed a restructured two-year, $50 million contract in April after he was a second-team All-Pro in 2025.

The grizzled vets could use some assistance from recent draft picks. Evans will lead a wide receiver corps that needs big contributions from Ricky Pearsall (a 2024 first-rounder) and rookie De'Zhaun Stribling, their first pick in April's draft. The 49ers took Stribling with the first pick of the second round after questions about Pearsall's durability intensified following a 36-catch season in which he missed eight games with a knee injury.

The 49ers are hoping to reduce McCaffrey's workload after he had an NFL-high 413 touches. They invested a third-round pick on Indiana's Kaelon Black in hopes that he can serve as a capable caddy, although Black's pass-catching skills are suspect — he had only eight catches across his final two college seasons.

The offensive line will return four starters, and a rookie, fourth-round pick Carver Willis, will have a chance to compete for the up-for-grabs spot at left



CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY
RUNNING BACK

KYLE TERADA-IMAGN IMAGES

guard. Willis' competition includes Robert Jones, who signed in March after sitting out last year with a broken bone in his neck. Connor Colby, a 2025 seventh-round pick who struggled in six fill-in starts, is also in the mix.

DEFENSE

Welcome, Raheem Morris. Now, fill some sizable shoes. The 49ers hired the Atlanta Falcons' former head coach as their new defensive coordinator after Robert Saleh parlayed his 2025 handiwork into the Tennessee Titans' head-coaching job. The 49ers ranked 13th in the NFL in scoring defense despite Warner, Bosa and defensive end Mykel Williams combining to miss 33 games.

The good news for Morris: Bosa and Warner should both be ready for Week 1, and Williams could be back in September. In addition, the 49ers took steps to upgrade the front four after they had an NFL-worst 20 sacks last year, three fewer than Cleveland's Myles Garrett.

Bosa's 14-game absence was a factor in the 49ers' inability to pressure QBs, but it didn't fully explain their lowest sack total since 2016. The 49ers didn't re-sign their starting defensive tackles, Jordan Elliott and Kalia Davis, and acquired Osa Odighizuwa from the Dallas Cowboys for a third-round pick. Last year, Odighizuwa's 52 pressures ranked sixth among defensive tackles and were 28 more than Elliott's and Davis' combined total. In the draft, the 49ers used a third-round pick on Texas Tech speed rusher Romello Height and invested a fourth-rounder on Oklahoma defensive tackle Gracen Halton.

The linebacker corps received a more modest makeover. The 49ers reunited what had been one of the NFL's top duos, Warner and Dre Greenlaw, by bringing back Greenlaw, their 2019 fifth-round pick who spent 2025 with the Broncos. The 49ers created space in the crowded position group by trading Dee Winters to the Cowboys. Winters' exit will create competition for the No. 3 role. The favorite is Tatum Bethune, a 2024 seventh-round pick who exceeded expectations last year when Warner's broken ankle shoved him into a starting role.

Deommodore Lenoir remains the No. 1 cornerback, but sidekick Renardo Green, a 2024 second-rounder, might be on notice after a sophomore slump that ended with head coach Kyle Shanahan screaming at him on the sideline during the divisional-round playoff loss in Seattle. The 49ers signed veterans Nate Hobbs and Jack Jones to one-year deals. Both can provide meaningful competition.

Malik Mustapha appears to have a starting safety spot secured, but Ji'Ayir Brown and Marques Sigle look like shaky options after they took turns being benched in 2025.

SPECIALISTS

The 49ers turned an Achilles heel into an overwhelming strength in 2025. They signed placekicker Eddy Piñeiro after waiving disappointing 2023 third-round pick Jake Moody in September, and Piñeiro delivered an epic year worthy of a four-year, $17 million offseason contract extension. Piñeiro made 28-of-29 field-goal attempts, leading the NFL in accuracy, and his lone miss was a 64-yard attempt that hit the middle of the crossbar.

Long-snapper Jon Weeks, who made his second Pro Bowl at 39 last year, will return. But the 49ers didn't re-sign punter Thomas Morstead, instead signing Corliss Waitman, who wasn't tendered by the Pittsburgh Steelers as an unrestricted free agent.

Return specialist Skyy Moore signed with the Green Bay Packers. Among the possible replacements is Junior Bergen, a 2025 seventh-round pick who tied an FCS record with eight career punt-return scores and added a kickoff-return touchdown.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The 49ers remain among the NFC's elite, but they have been surpassed in their division by the Seattle Seahawks and Los Angeles Rams, whose stellar recent drafts have created talented young cores. The 49ers aren't lacking star power, but their stars are aging. Their premium picks from recent drafts — players such as Pearsall and Williams — likely need to emerge to end the Super Bowl drought.

2025 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 7	AT SEATTLE	W	17-13
Sept. 14	AT NEW ORLEANS	W	26-21
Sept. 21	ARIZONA	W	16-15
Sept. 28	Jacksonville	L	21-26
Oct. 2	AT L.A. RAMS (OT)	W	26-23
Oct. 12	at Tampa Bay	L	19-30
Oct. 19	ATLANTA	W	20-10
Oct. 26	at Houston	L	15-26
Nov. 2	AT N.Y. GIANTS	W	34-24
Nov. 9	L.A. Rams	L	26-42
Nov. 16	AT ARIZONA	W	41-22
Nov. 24	CAROLINA	W	20-9
Nov. 30	AT CLEVELAND	W	26-8
Dec. 14	TENNESSEE	W	37-24
Dec. 22	AT INDIANAPOLIS	W	48-27
Dec. 28	CHICAGO	W	42-38
Jan. 3	Seattle	L	3-13
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 11	AT PHILADELPHIA	W	23-19
Jan. 17	at Seattle	L	6-41

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	351.4	7	5
RUSHING	106.9	24	14
PASSING	244.5	5	4
SCORING	25.7	10	6
THIRD DOWN %	49.8	1	1
POINTS/PLAY	0.388	T11	T5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	340.2	20	11
RUSHING	107.8	11	3
PASSING	232.4	25	13
SCORING	21.8	13	6
INTERCEPTIONS	6	T29	T15
SACKS	20	32	16
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.374	17	7
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-6	26	13

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
BROCK PURDY	284	197	2,167	20	10
MAC JONES	289	201	2,151	13	6

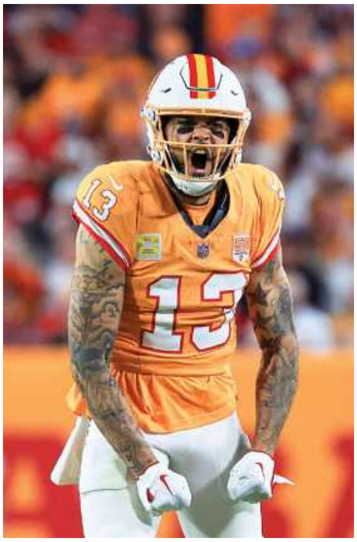
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY	311	1,202	3.9	10
BRIAN ROBINSON JR.	92	400	4.3	2
BROCK PURDY	33	147	4.5	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY	102	924	9.1	7
GEORGE KITTLE	57	628	11.0	7
JAUAN JENNINGS	55	643	11.7	9
KENDRICK BOURNE	37	551	14.9	0
RICKY PEARSALL	36	528	14.7	0

KICKING: Eddy Piñeiro, 28-29 FGs, 34-38 PATs, 118 points; Matt Gay, 4-4 FGs, 4-4 PATs, 16 points; Jake Moody, 1-3 FGs, 2-2 PATs, 5 points; **TACKLES:** Dee Winters, 101; Tatum Bethune, 94; **SACKS:** Bryce Huff, 4.0; Clelin Ferrell, 4.0; **INTERCEPTIONS:** Ji'Ayir Brown, 2; Deommodore Lenoir, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ROAD WARRIORS The 49ers will set an NFL record by traveling more than 38,000 miles this season. They will open the regular season in Melbourne, Australia, against the Los Angeles Rams and will visit Mexico City in early December, becoming the first team to play international games in different countries in non-consecutive weeks. Their Week 1 trip will mark the NFL's first game in Australia. Head coach Kyle Shanahan responded sarcastically when asked about making history Down Under: "Oh, I'm so fired up. That was our goal — to go 19 hours away to play a game."



KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

SHOW ME THE LOMBARDI Wide receiver **Mike Evans** turned down more lucrative contract offers, including from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, his employer for his first 12 seasons, to sign a relatively modest three-year, $42.4 million deal with the 49ers featuring $14.3 million guaranteed at signing. Evans, entering his age-33 season, has prioritized winning his second Super Bowl before he retires. Said Shanahan: "I love the thought of pairing him up with some of the guys that, to me, are playing for one reason, and that's trying to get to a Super Bowl."

NOTHINGBURGER The 49ers' injury woes helped fuel a viral conspiracy theory late last season: Low-frequency electromagnetic fields from the Silicon Valley Power Northern Receiving Station, the electrical substation adjacent to the team facility, were the cause of their inordinate attrition. The theory inspired national headlines, and players such as George Kittle and Christian McCaffrey wondered if EMF was a threat. The 49ers said they hired an independent scientist this offseason who determined that their workspace was safe. General manager John Lynch said the study revealed the theory was a "big nothingburger."

SCOUTING THE 49ERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SAN FRANCISCO

"The 49ers are retooling at receiver, bringing in future Hall of Fame selection Mike Evans to add size, professionalism and a proven ability to catch. Evans should be a great mentor to Ricky Pearsall. … The Brandon Aiyuk situation has been a disaster, obviously. Trade him or cut him, whatever, but actually move on and salvage the situation. … Christian Kirk didn't fit in well with the Texans; maybe this change of scenery will work out. … The 49ers needed speed at receiver, and they got it and then some with De'Zhaun Stribling (4.36 40-yard dash). … It only made logical sense for the 49ers and veteran tackle Trent Williams to reach a compromise financially. It was unfortunate that it took so long to get done, but the right thing happened in the end. … Jake Brendel doesn't get the love he deserves as a good center. … The comeback should be epic for veteran tight end George Kittle. … Brock Purdy processes fast and makes great decisions. … Christian McCaffrey keeps piling up numbers and making defenses look bad. … Fullback Kyle Juszczyk doubles as an effective lead blocker and a really efficient receiver. … A healthy Nick Bosa changes everything. … Between Mykel Williams, Alfred Collins and Osa Odighizuwa, the defensive line around Bosa is sound. … Fred Warner really doesn't have anyone in his category as an off-ball linebacker. … A fresh start for Dre Greenlaw after things didn't flow for him in Denver. … Upton Stout is a hard-hitting nickel. … Secondary lacks big names, but they play well together."

2026 49ERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Jones, Mac	QB	6-3	220	5	Alabama	FA-Jac-25	D1-NE-21
4	Martinez, Adrian	QB	6-2	220	1	Kansas State	FA-25	FA-Det-23
13	Purdy, Brock	QB	6-1	220	4	Iowa State	D7-22	D7-SF-22
14	Rourke, Kurtis	QB	6-4	220	1	Indiana	D7a-25	D7a-SF-25

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
31	Guerendo, Isaac	RB	6-0	221	2	Louisville	D4b-24	D4b-SF-24
29	James, Jordan	RB	5-9	208	1	Oregon	D5a-25	D5a-SF-25
44	Juszczyk, Kyle	FB	6-2	235	13	Harvard	FA-17	D4-Bal-13
23	McCaffrey, Christian	RB	5-11	210	9	Stanford	T-Car-22	D1-Car-17
	McCormick, Sincere	RB	5-9	205	2	UTSA	FA-26	FA-LV-22
32	Taylor Jr., Patrick	RB	6-2	217	6	Memphis	FA-GB-24	FA-GB-20

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11	Aiyuk, Brandon	WR	6-0	200	6	Arizona State	D1b-20	D1b-SF-20
83	Baker, Javon	WR	6-1	202	2	UCF	FA-25	D4-NE-24
86	Bergen, Junior	WR	5-9	184	1	Montana	D7c-25	D7c-SF-25
19	Cowing, Jacob	WR	5-9	171	2	Arizona	D4c-24	D4c-SF-24
5	Evans, Mike	WR	6-5	231	12	Texas A&M	FA-TB-26	D1-TB-14
89	Farrell, Luke	TE	6-5	250	5	Ohio State	FA-Jac-25	D5-Jac-21
3	Kirk, Christian	WR	5-11	200	8	Texas A&M	FA-Hou-26	D2-Ari-18
85	Kittle, George	TE	6-4	250	9	Iowa	D5a-17	D5a-SF-17
1	Pearsall, Ricky	WR	6-1	189	2	Florida	D1-24	D1-SF-24
7	Robinson, Demarcus	WR	6-1	202	10	Florida	FA-LAR-25	D4-KC-16 83
83	Rucci, Hayden	TE	6-5	247	1	Wisconsin	FA-26	FA-Mia-24
88	Tonges, Jake	TE	6-4	240	3	Cal	FA-23	FA-Chi-22
81	Turner, Malik	WR	6-2	202	6	Illinois	FA-25	FA-Sea-18
17	Watkins, Jordan	WR	5-11	196	1	Ole Miss	D4b-25	D4b-SF-25
9	Willis, Brayden	TE	6-4	240	3	Oklahoma	D7a-23	D7a-SF-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
67	Alarcon, Isaac	OL	6-7	320	1	Monterrey Tech	FA-24	FA-Dal-20
64	Brendel, Jake	OL	6-4	299	8	UCLA	FA-20	FA-Dal-16
75	Colby, Connor	OL	6-5	309	1	Iowa	D7b-25	D7b-SF-25
65	Jones, Robert	G	6-4	320	5	Middle Tennessee	FA-Dal-26	FA-Mia-21
76	Lowe, Vederian	T	6-5	315	4	Illinois	FA-NE-26	D6a-Min-22
68	McKivitz, Colton	OL	6-6	301	6	West Virginia	D5-20	D5-SF-20
66	Nugent, Drake	OL	6-1	300	1	Michigan	FA-24	FA-SF-24
60	Parker, Brandon	OL	6-8	320	6	North Carolina A&T	FA-25	D3-LV-18
62	Pleasants, Austen	OL	6-7	330	3	Ohio	FA-24	FA-Jac-20
77	Puni, Dominick	OL	6-5	313	2	Kansas	D3-24	D3-SF-24
61	Thomas, Zach	T	6-5	305	3	San Diego State	FA-26	D6-Chi-22
74	Toth, Brett	OL	6-6	304	6	Army	FA-Phi-26	FA-Phi-19
71	Williams, Trent	T	6-5	320	16	Oklahoma	T-Was-20	D1-Was-10
63	Zakelj, Nick	OL	6-6	316	4	Fordham	D6a-22	D6a-SF-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
58	Anderson, Evan	DL	6-3	326	2	Florida Atlantic	FA-24	FA-SF-24
97	Bosa, Nick	DL	6-4	266	7	Ohio State	D1-19	D1-SF-19
69	Bradley-King, William	DL	6-4	265	2	Baylor	FA-25	D7-Was-21
95	Collins, Alfred	DL	6-5	332	1	Texas	D2-25	D2-SF-25
50	Farmer II, Andrew	DL	6-4	250	2	Lane	FA-25	FA-LAC-23
92	Odighizuwa, Osa	DT	6-2	285	5	UCLA	T-Dal-26	D3a-Dal-21
91	Okuayinonu, Sam	DL	6-1	269	3	Maryland	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
96	Sample, Cameron	DE	6-3	272	5	Tulane	FA-Cin-26	D4a-Cin-21
55	Valdez, Sebastian	DL	6-3	301	1	Washington	FA-25	FA-SF-25
99	West, C.J.	DL	6-1	316	1	Indiana	D4a-25	D4a-SF-25
56	White, Keion	DL	6-5	285	3	Georgia Tech	T-NE-25	D2-NE-23
98	Williams, Mykel	DL	6-5	267	1	Georgia	D1-25	D1-SF-25

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
48	Bethune, Tatum	LB	6-1	230	2	Florida State	D7-24	D7-SF-24
51	Gifford, Luke	LB	6-3	243	7	Nebraska	FA-Ten-25	FA-Dal-19
41	Graham, Jalen	LB	6-3	220	3	Purdue	D7c-23	D7c-SF-23
57	Greenlaw, Dre	LB	6-0	230	7	Arkansas	FA-Den-26	D5-SF-19
45	Martin, Nick	LB	5-11	221	1	Oklahoma State	D3a-25	D3a-SF-25
49	Wallow, Garret	LB	6-2	230	5	TCU	W-Den-25	D5-Hou-21
54	Warner, Fred	LB	6-3	230	8	BYU	D3a-18	D3a-SF-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30	Apple, Eli	CB	6-1	203	10	Ohio State	FA-25	D1-NYG-16
27	Brown, Ji'Ayir	S	5-11	202	3	Penn State	D3a-23	D3a-SF-23
40	Canteen, Derrick	DB	5-10	193	1	Cincinnati	FA-25	FA-SF-25
29	Forrest, Darrick	S	6-0	200	4	Cincinnati	FA-26	D5-Was-21
0	Green, Renardo	CB	6-0	186	2	Florida State	D2-24	D2-SF-24
22	Hobbs, Nate	CB	6-0	195	5	Illinois	FA-GB-26	D5-LV-21
24	Jones, Jack	CB	5-11	175	4	Arizona State	FA-Mia-26	D4-NE-22
2	Lenoir, Deommodore	DB	5-10	200	5	Oregon	D5b-21	D5b-SF-21
28	Luter Jr., Darrell	CB	6-0	190	3	South Alabama	D5a-23	D5a-SF-23
	McMorris, Patrick	S	6-0	206	1	Cal	FA-26	D6b-Mia-24
6	Mustapha, Malik	S	5-10	206	2	Wake Forest	D4a-24	D4a-SF-24
33	Neal, Siran	DB	6-0	206	8	Jacksonville State	FA-Mia-25	D5a-Buf-18
43	Robinson, Jakob	CB	5-10	181	1	BYU	FA-25	FA-SF-25
36	Sigle, Marques	S	5-11	199	1	Kansas State	D5b-25	D5b-SF-25
20	Stout, Upton	CB	5-9	181	1	WKU	D3b-25	D3b-SF-25

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Piñeiro, Eddy	K	5-11	190	6	Florida	FA-25	FA-LV-18
7	Waitman, Corliss	P	6-2	210	4	South Alabama	FA-Pit-26	FA-Pit-20
46	Weeks, Jon	LS	5-10	242	16	Baylor	FA-Hou-25	FA-Hou-10

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Mike Evans	3	Christian Kirk
WR	1	Ricky Pearsall		De'Zhaun Stribling (R)
LT	71	Trent Williams	76	Vederian Lowe
LG	65	Robert Jones		Carver Willis (R)
C	64	Jake Brendel	74	Brett Toth
RG	77	Dominick Puni	75	Connor Colby
RT	68	Colton McKivitz	62	Austen Pleasants
TE	85	George Kittle	89	Luke Farrell
QB	13	Brock Purdy	10	Mac Jones
RB	23	Christian McCaffrey		Kaelon Black (R)
FB	44	Kyle Juszczyk		

DEFENSE

DE	97	Nick Bosa		Romello Height (R)
DT	92	Osa Odighizuwa	99	C.J. West
DT	95	Alfred Collins		Gracen Halton (R)
DE	98	Mykel Williams	56	Keion White
ILB	54	Fred Warner		Jaden Dugger (R)
ILB	48	Tatum Bethune	51	Luke Gifford
WLB	57	Dre Greenlaw	45	Nick Martin
CB	2	Deommodore Lenoir	20	Upton Stout
CB	0	Renardo Green	24	Jack Jones
SS	27	Ji'Ayir Brown	33	Siran Neal
FS	6	Malik Mustapha	36	Marques Sigle

SPECIALISTS

K	18	Eddy Piñeiro	KR	17	Jordan Watkins
P	7	Corliss Waitman	PR	19	Jacob Cowing

3.2% The 49ers produced a sack on a league-low 3.2% of opposing dropbacks, 1.1 percentage points behind the Ravens.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: D+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2	De'Zhaun Stribling	WR	6-2	207	Ole Miss
3	Romello Height	DE	6-2	239	Texas Tech
3	Kaelon Black	RB	5-9	208	Indiana
4	Gracen Halton	DT	6-2	293	Oklahoma
4	Carver Willis	OL	6-5	303	Washington
4	Ephesians Prysock	CB	6-3	196	Washington
5	Jaden Dugger	LB	6-4	240	Louisiana
5	Enrique Cruz Jr.	OT	6-5	313	Kansas

After the previous three drafts netted few immediate impact players, the 49ers' latest effort left much of their fan base grumbling. De'Zhaun Stribling has an intriguing size-speed combination, but few analysts expected to see him off the board at No. 33. Romello Height is an undersized 25-year-old rookie who had 6.5 sacks and two shoulder surgeries in his first five college seasons before finally breaking out in 2025. Kaelon Black has so-so speed and questionable pass-catching ability, but the 49ers made him the third running back drafted after he wasn't among the 21 at the position invited to the NFL Scouting Combine. Enrique Cruz Jr.'s elite athletic test scores make him worth a flier as a developmental project with an eye on replacing Trent Williams in 2028.

SEAHAWKS

NFC WEST FORECAST

1

2026 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
SEPT. 9	**NEW ENGLAND**	**8:20**
SEPT. 20	AT ARIZONA	4:25
SEPT. 27	AT WASHINGTON	1:00
OCT. 4	**L.A. CHARGERS**	**4:25**
OCT. 11	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**4:25**
OCT. 15	AT DENVER	8:15
OCT. 25	**KANSAS CITY**	**8:20**
NOV. 2	**CHICAGO**	**8:15**
NOV. 8	**ARIZONA**	**4:25**
NOV. 15	AT LAS VEGAS	4:05
NOV. 22	BYE	
NOV. 29	AT SAN FRANCISCO	4:25
DEC. 7	**DALLAS**	**8:15**
DEC. 13	**N.Y. GIANTS**	**4:25**
DEC. 19	AT PHILADELPHIA	5:00
DEC. 25	**L.A. RAMS**	**8:15**
JAN. 3	AT CAROLINA	1:00
TBD	AT L.A. RAMS	

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2021	7
2022 NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2023	9
2024	10
2025 SUPER BOWL CHAMPION	14

THE STAFF

Head Coach: **MIKE MACDONALD**
Record With Team: **24-10**
Career Record: **24-10**
Offensive Coordinator: **BRIAN FLEURY**
Defensive Coordinator: **ADEN DURDE**
Special Teams Coordinator: **JAY HARBAUGH**
Assistant Head Coach: **LESLIE FRAZIER**
Offensive Passing Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: **JAKE PEETZ**
Quarterbacks: **TYSON PRINCE**
Senior Offensive Assistant/Running Backs: **THOMAS HAMMOCK**
Run Game Coordinator: **JUSTIN OUTTEN**
Wide Receivers: **FRISMAN JACKSON**
Tight Ends: **MACK BROWN**
Senior Offensive Assistant/Offensive Line: **JOHN BENTON**
Defensive Line: **JUSTIN HINDS**
Inside Linebackers: **ZACHARY ORR**
Outside Linebackers: **JOSH BYNES**
Defensive Run Game Coordinator: **CHRIS PARTRIDGE**
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: **KARL SCOTT**
Safeties: **JEFF HOWARD**

Ernest Jones IV was wearing a "SUPER BOWL LX CHAMPIONS" cap and smoking a cigar. Champagne and beer sprayed. Bass boomed across the locker room. The linebacker and his teammates had just dominated the Patriots to win Seattle's second Vince Lombardi Trophy in its 50-year NFL history. Yet there Jones was, in that raucous Seahawks locker room at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, on Feb. 8, feeling sad.

"Honestly, it's so surreal, man," Jones said amid all the celebration after Super Bowl LX. "I'm just looking at all the guys celebrating, and it means everything. Honestly, this [Super Bowl] week's been super sad. Because unfortunately, it has to end. Unfortunately, I don't get a chance to be around these guys next week. There are no more games. And it's not going to be the same group. It sucks, honestly."

Seahawks coaches and players said it throughout their 2025 season: The reason they won it all was their culture and sense of brotherhood under head coach Mike Macdonald. Veterans and rookies alike said they'd never felt such camaraderie inside a locker room.

Can the Seahawks come close to replicating that togetherness? A positive sign emerged this spring. Macdonald told his veterans to enjoy their Super Bowl title and stay home for the first phases of the voluntary offseason program. Yet on Day 1 of Phase 1, Pro Bowl cornerback Devon Witherspoon, 11th-year defensive tackle Jarran Reed and fourth-year outside linebacker Derick Hall were in the team's weight room lifting with young, developmental Seahawks. "I was blown away by some of the guys that showed up and that we weren't asking to be here at this point in time," Macdonald says. "The energy is really great. There's still a sense of urgency and spirit to the guys, which is exciting."

OFFENSE

The only losses on this side of the ball: Super Bowl MVP running back Kenneth Walker III signed a $43 million free-agent deal with the Kansas City Chiefs, and play-caller Klint Kubiak is the Las Vegas Raiders' new head coach.

Those are significant exits. In his only season calling the offense, Kubiak had the Seahawks near the top of the league in percentage of running plays. Walker shared carries with Zach Charbonnet, who rushed for 12 touchdowns, Seattle's most since Marshawn Lynch in 2014. But Charbonnet tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during Seattle's NFC divisional playoff game against San Francisco in mid-January and may not return until well into this coming season, if then. Charbonnet's injury and Walker's exit prompted the Seahawks to make Notre Dame's Jadarian Price only the fourth running back selected in the first round in the franchise's 51-year history.

New offensive coordinator Brian Fleury arrives after a stint as the 49ers' run-game coordinator and tight ends coach. He's steeped in the Shanahan outside-zone running system, the scheme Kubiak installed to great effect in 2025.

Price has the inside track to be Seattle's new lead back. Emanuel Wilson, a part-time back with the Green Bay Packers, signed in free agency. Former undrafted free agent George Holani enters his third season.

Darnold enters the second year of a three-year deal having already justified Macdonald's and general manager John Schneider's decision in March 2025 to trade Geno Smith and make the well-traveled Darnold Seattle's new franchise quarterback. Darnold's three-year, $100 million contract is already a bargain.

SAM DARNOLD
QUARTERBACK

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

Darnold has reigning NFL Offensive Player of the Year Jaxon Smith-Njigba and 2022 Offensive Player of the Year Cooper Kupp returning as his top targets. The Seahawks re-signed Rashid Shaheed for $17 million per season more for his Pro Bowl kickoff and punt return skills than for his duties as third wide receiver. The team expects speedy Tory Horton to return from the shin injury that ended his rookie season in November. Tight end AJ Barner is an emerging star. In two seasons, he's proven to be a more dangerous receiver than he showed in college at Michigan and Indiana, where he was more of a blocker.

Veteran NFL outside-zone teacher John Benton returns to coach the offensive line, Seattle's most improved unit in 2025. Bookend tackles Charles Cross and Abraham Lucas signed big extensions. Grey Zabel debuted as a stud Day 1 starter at left guard, fixing a problem spot. Jalen Sundell, an undrafted rookie in 2024 from North Dakota State (where he was Zabel's roommate), solidified the center spot. Anthony Bradford returns as the maligned right guard entering the final year of his rookie contract. Rookie Beau Stephens will challenge him.

DEFENSE

The 39-year-old Macdonald, the former Baltimore Ravens defensive coordinator, has 10 starters returning to a unit that led the league in scoring defense.

Seattle re-signed Josh Jobe to start opposite Witherspoon at cornerback. Riq Woolen signed with Philadelphia in March after alternating with Jobe in a three-cornerback rotation, and the Seahawks drafted Arkansas cornerback Julian Neal in the third round as a potential replacement. They also drafted TCU safety Bud Clark in the second round after Coby Bryant, Seattle's starting safety next to Julian Love last season, signed with Chicago.

Witherspoon and Nick Emmanwori are Macdonald's favorite chess pieces. He moves them around his amoeba defense, from inside at nickel and dime, to blitzing, to press-man or zone coverage. Emmanwori is listed as a safety, but he is really more of a linebacker. Nickel and dime are essentially the Seahawks' base sets.

The Seahawks lost edge Boye Mafe to a $20 million-per-year free-agent contract in Cincinnati but filled the gap by signing 10-year veteran edge rusher Dante Fowler Jr. to a one-year deal. Fowler had three sacks for Dallas in 2025 but 10.5 with 14 tackles for a loss for Washington in 2024.

Defensive end DeMarcus Lawrence, 34, is coming off a Pro Bowl season. This will be his 13th NFL campaign. Fellow Pro Bowl defensive lineman Leonard Williams is 32, and Reed will turn 34 this winter. Whether the Seahawks can continue to get elite performances from that trio, who possess 33 combined seasons of experience, will be a key to the continued success of the Seahawks' hybrid 3-4 defense. A repeat of versatile tackle Byron Murphy II's stellar 2025 would help.

SPECIALISTS

By most metrics, Seattle had the league's best special teams in 2025. So the Seahawks retained Shaheed as well as other core players from the kicking game. Placekicker Jason Myers, 35, is coming off a career year. Michael Dickson and the New York Giants' Jordan Stout are the NFL's richest punters at more than $4 million per season apiece, and Dickson is worth the money. He's a weapon who tilts field position in favor of Seattle's game-changing defense.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Seahawks return 20 of 22 starters from the team that won the Super Bowl. Health, of course, is the key to a repeat. The concerns: the unproven running back situation on a run-based offense; the reliance on a rapidly aging defensive line; and the Los Angeles Rams, who still have reigning MVP Matthew Stafford. Expect Seattle and L.A. to win at least games 12 apiece while fighting for the NFC West title and the conference's top playoff seed.

2025 RESULTS (14-3)

Sept. 7	San Francisco	L	13-17
Sept. 14	**AT PITTSBURGH**	**W**	**31-17**
Sept. 21	**NEW ORLEANS**	**W**	**44-13**
Sept. 25	**AT ARIZONA**	**W**	**23-20**
Oct. 5	Tampa Bay	L	35-38
Oct. 12	**AT JACKSONVILLE**	**W**	**20-12**
Oct. 20	**HOUSTON**	**W**	**27-19**
Nov. 2	**AT WASHINGTON**	**W**	**38-14**
Nov. 9	**ARIZONA**	**W**	**44-22**
Nov. 16	at L.A. Rams	L	19-21
Nov. 23	**AT TENNESSEE**	**W**	**30-24**
Nov. 30	**MINNESOTA**	**W**	**26-0**
Dec. 7	**AT ATLANTA**	**W**	**37-9**
Dec. 14	**INDIANAPOLIS**	**W**	**18-16**
Dec. 18	**L.A. RAMS (OT)**	**W**	**38-37**
Dec. 28	**AT CAROLINA**	**W**	**27-10**
Jan. 3	**AT SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**13-3**
	POSTSEASON		
Jan. 17	**SAN FRANCISCO**	**W**	**41-6**
Jan. 25	**L.A. RAMS**	**W**	**31-27**
Feb. 8	**NEW ENGLAND**	**W**	**29-13**

2025 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	351.3	8	6
RUSHING	123.3	T10	7
PASSING	228.1	8	6
SCORING	28.4	3	2
THIRD DOWN %	39.8	16	8
POINTS/PLAY	0.485	1	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
TOTAL	285.9	6	2
RUSHING	91.9	3	1
PASSING	193.9	10	4
SCORING	17.2	1	1
INTERCEPTIONS	18	5	2
SACKS	47	T7	T4
OPP. POINTS/PLAY	0.270	1	1
TO DIFFERENTIAL	-3	T19	11

2025 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
SAM DARNOLD	477	323	4,048	25	14

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
KENNETH WALKER III	221	1,027	4.6	5
ZACH CHARBONNET	184	730	4.0	12

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA	119	1,793	15.1	10
AJ BARNER	52	519	10.0	6
COOPER KUPP	47	593	12.6	2
KENNETH WALKER III	31	282	9.1	0
ZACH CHARBONNET	20	144	7.2	0

KICKING: Jason Myers, 41-48 FGs, 48-48 PATs, 171 points
TACKLES: Ernest Jones IV, 126; Drake Thomas, 96
SACKS: 3 players tied with 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Ernest Jones IV, 5; Coby Bryant, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

"HARD KNOCKS" COMES KNOCKING They resisted it for the 17 years John Schneider has been the team's general manager. But NFL Films' "Hard Knocks" series for HBO will feature the Seahawks this summer for training camp, for the first time. It's also the first time since its first season 25 years ago that the series is featuring the defending Super Bowl champion. Schneider says the team will be cordial, but guarded. He and head coach Mike Macdonald intend to conceal many of the secrets to their championship culture inside the locker room and building.

TV STARS NFL Films' cameras are likely to make national TV stars out of the brashest Seahawks. The "Hard Knocks" producers will love trash-talking Pro Bowl cornerback **Devon Witherspoon**. He's Seattle's most Richard Sherman-like player since, well, Richard Sherman. Camera-ready tight end AJ Barner and small-town-Midwest guard Grey Zabel will provide highly entertaining shows on the offense. Macdonald? He's likely to smirk through it all.

COMPETITOR SCALE Schneider felt one of the reasons the Seahawks went 11 years between Super Bowl appearances was that the players the team drafted post-Legion of Boom in the mid-2010s arrived in awe of Sherman, Kam Chancellor, Earl Thomas III, Michael Bennett and friends. So this year, he made a "Competitor Scale" for the Seahawks' draft board. It included intangibles such as a prospect's self-belief. Running back Jadarian Price, safety Bud Clark, cornerback Julian Neal, guard Beau Stephens and the team's four other rookie draft picks scored very high in bravado and confidence. The intent is for these rookies to make Seahawks practices more competitive than in previous years.

YOUTHFUL CONFIDENCE Minutes after the champion Seahawks made him their third-round pick in April, rookie cornerback Julian Neal had this to say: "We're going back-to-back this year." Neal hadn't even gotten a locker yet, let alone participated in an NFL practice or game. "Julian said that?" Schneider asked. "We'll talk to him about messages," Macdonald said.

SCOUTING THE SEAHAWKS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SEATTLE

"The defending champions are proof that NFL teams can win it all on defense, provided that the offense holds up its end of the bargain. The formula worked, and head coach Mike Macdonald and general manager John Schneider have worked very well together. … Getting quarterback Sam Darnold in place and having an accurate thrower like him paid off. His timing with Jaxon Smith-Njigba was excellent. They have real speed to work with opposite him, with Rashid Shaheed and a reliable possession-type in Cooper Kupp. … They are equipped to replace Super Bowl MVP Kenneth Walker III by plugging in Zach Charbonnet and Jadarian Price. That tandem should work. … The left side of the offensive line is particularly good with tackle Charles Cross and guard Grey Zabel. … AJ Barner is the latest Michigan man to excel at tight end in the NFL. … The Seahawks are excited about shifty rookie Emmanuel Henderson Jr. … Nobody has much success blocking Byron Murphy II. He's the headliner of a deep defensive line that includes Leonard Williams, Jarran Reed and DeMarcus Lawrence and added Dante Fowler Jr. after the draft. … At linebacker, the Seahawks get the job done well with Uchenna Nwosu, Drake Thomas and Ernest Jones IV. … While this secondary doesn't hearken back to the Legion of Boom era, they're no slouches. Especially Devon Witherspoon, one of the top corners, athletic nickel Nick Emmanwori and safety Julian Love. … Could the Seahawks run it back? Sure, not out of the question, even with a tougher schedule."

CARY EDMONDSON-IMAGN IMAGES

2026 SEAHAWKS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Darnold, Sam	QB	6-3	225	8	USC	FA-Min-25	D1-NYJ-18
2	Lock, Drew	QB	6-4	228	7	Missouri	FA-NYG-25	D2b-Den-19
6	Milroe, Jalen	QB	6-2	216	1	Alabama	D3-25	D3-Sea-25

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26	Charbonnet, Zach	RB	6-1	220	3	UCLA	D2b-23	D2b-Sea-23
36	Holani, George	RB	5-10	208	2	Boise State	FA-24	FA-Sea-24
33	Jones Jr., Velus	RB	6-0	204	4	Tennessee	FA-25	D3-Chi-22
25	McIntosh, Kenny	RB	6-0	211	3	Georgia	D7-23	D7-Sea-23
40	Ouzts, Robbie	FB	6-3	274	1	Alabama	D5c-25	D5c-Sea-25
38	Russell, Brady	FB	6-3	250	3	Colorado	PS-Phi-23	FA-Phi-23
27	Wilson, Emanuel	RB	5-10	226	3	Fort Valley State	FA-GB-26	FA-GB-23
31	Wright, Jacardia	RB	6-0	218	1	Missouri State	FA-25	FA-Sea-25

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Arroyo, Elijah	TE	6-5	254	1	Miami (Fla.)	D2b-25	D2b-Sea-25
88	Barner, AJ	TE	6-6	251	2	Michigan	D4b-24	D4b-Sea-24
19	Bobo, Jake	WR	6-4	211	3	Duke	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
31	Broden, Tyrone	WR	6-5	194	1	Arkansas	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
46	Bryant, Harrison	TE	6-5	243	6	Florida Atlantic	FA-Hou-26	D4-Cle-20
87	Foster Jr., Montorie	WR	5-11	188	1	Michigan State	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
15	Horton, Tory	WR	6-2	196	1	Colorado State	D5b-25	D5b-Sea-25
89	Kallerup, Nick	TE	6-5	266	1	Minnesota	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
10	Kupp, Cooper	WR	6-2	207	9	Eastern Washington	FA-LAR-25	D3a-LAR-17
81	Saubert, Eric	TE	6-5	248	8	Drake	FA-SF-25	D5-Atl-17
22	Shaheed, Rashid	WR	6-0	180	4	Weber State	T-NO-25	FA-NO-22
11	Smith-Njigba, Jaxon	WR	6-0	202	3	Ohio State	D1b-23	D1b-Sea-23
82	White, Cody	WR	6-3	227	6	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-KC-20
86	White III, Ricky	WR	6-1	181	1	UNLV	D7c-25	D7c-Sea-25

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75	Bradford, Anthony	G	6-4	335	3	LSU	D4a-23	D4a-Sea-23
73	Brown, Logan	T	6-6	312	1	Kansas	FA-25	FA-Min-25
77	Cabeldue, Bryce	G	6-4	308	1	Kansas	D6-25	D6-Sea-25
67	Cross, Charles	T	6-5	317	4	Mississippi State	D1-22	D1-Sea-22
64	Haynes, Christian	G	6-3	317	2	UConn	D3-24	D3-Sea-24
74	Jones, Josh	G/T	6-7	339	6	Houston	FA-Bal-25	D3-Ari-20
79	Kight, Amari	T	6-6	299	1	UCF	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
66	Lemieux, Shane	G	6-4	306	6	Oregon	FA-NYG-25	D5-NYG-20
72	Lucas, Abraham	T	6-6	322	4	Washington State	D3-22	D3-Sea-22
62	Maranges, Federico	C	6-3	302	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
55	Oluwatimi, Olu	C	6-2	309	3	Michigan	D5b-23	D5b-Sea-23
78	Richman, Mason	T/G	6-5	307	1	Iowa	D7b-25	D7b-Sea-25
61	Sundell, Jalen	C	6-5	301	2	North Dakota State	FA-24	FA-Sea-24
76	Zabel, Grey	G	6-6	316	1	North Dakota State	D1-25	D1-Sea-25

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0	Lawrence, DeMarcus	DE	6-3	254	12	Boise State	FA-Dal-25	D2-Dal-14
98	Mills, Rylie	DE	6-5	296	1	Notre Dame	D5a-25	D5a-Sea-25
94	Morris, Mike	DE	6-6	306	3	Michigan	D5a-23	D5a-Sea-23
91	Murphy II, Byron	DT	6-0	306	2	Texas	D1-24	D1-Sea-24
95	Pili, Brandon	NT	6-3	334	3	USC	W-Mia-24	FA-Mia-23
90	Reed, Jarran	NT	6-3	315	10	Alabama	D2-16	D2-Sea-16
70	Singleton, J.R.	NT	6-1	299	1	Iowa State	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
69	Thomas, Bubba	DT	6-1	301	1	South Alabama	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
99	Williams, Leonard	DT	6-5	310	11	USC	T-NYG-23	D1-NYJ-15

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Fowler Jr., Dante	LB	6-3	261	11	Florida	FA-26	D1-Jac-15
47	Gaines, Jalan	LB	6-3	242	1	Illinois State	FA-26	FA-Sea-25
58	Hall, Derick	LB	6-3	260	3	Auburn	D2a-23	D2a-Sea-23
51	Ivey, Jared	LB	6-6	274	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
13	Jones IV, Ernest	LB	6-2	233	5	South Carolina	T-Ten-24	D3-Ten-21
48	Knight, Tyrice	LB	6-0	233	2	UTEP	D4a-24	D4a-Sea-24
7	Nwosu, Uchenna	LB	6-2	265	8	USC	FA-LAC-22	D2-LAC-18
52	O'Connell, Patrick	LB	6-1	231	3	Montana	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
57	O'Toole, Connor	LB	6-3	248	1	Utah	FA-25	FA-Sea-25
49	Paul Jr., Chris	LB	6-1	235	1	Ole Miss	FA-25	D5-LAR-25
50	Sheriff, Jamie	LB	6-1	254	2	South Alabama	FA-24	FA-Sea-24
44	Surratt, Chazz	LB	6-2	233	5	North Carolina	FA-25	D3-Min-21
32	Thomas, Drake	LB	5-11	228	3	NC State	W-LV-23	FA-LV-23
46	Weston, Ja'Markis	LB	6-2	234	1	Florida	FA-25	FA-NYJ-25

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Bell, D'Anthony	S	6-1	211	4	West Florida	FA-Car-26	FA-Cle-22
3	Emmanwori, Nick	S	6-3	220	1	South Carolina	D2a-25	D2a-Sea-25
30	Finley, AJ	S	6-2	202	3	Ole Miss	W-LAC-24	FA-LAC-23
43	Hook, Maxen	S	6-0	205	1	Toledo	FA-25	FA-Phi-25
17	Igbinoghene, Noah	CB	5-11	197	6	Auburn	FA-Was-26	D1c-Mia-20
34	Jean-Charles, Shemar	CB	5-10	184	5	Appalachian State	FA-NO-25	D5-GB-21
29	Jobe, Josh	CB	5-11	190	4	Alabama	FA-24	FA-Phi-22
20	Love, Julian	S	5-11	195	7	Notre Dame	FA-NYG-23	D4-NYG-19
39	Okada, Ty	S	5-11	200	3	Montana State	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
28	Pritchett, Nehemiah	CB	6-0	190	2	Auburn	D5-24	D5-Sea-24
24	Thomas II, Rodney	S	6-1	196	4	Yale	FA-Ind-26	D7-Ind-22
21	Witherspoon, Devon	CB	6-0	185	3	Illinois	D1a-23	D1a-Sea-23

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Dickson, Michael	P	6-2	208	8	Texas	D5c-18	D5c-Sea-18
5	Myers, Jason	K	5-10	190	11	Marist	FA-NYJ-19	FA-Jac-15
41	Stoll, Chris	LS	6-2	255	3	Penn State	FA-23	FA-Sea-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	Cooper Kupp	22	Rashid Shaheed
WR	11	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	15	Tory Horton
LT	67	Charles Cross	74	Josh Jones
LG	76	Grey Zabel	60	Beau Stephens (R)
C	61	Jalen Sundell	55	Olu Oluwatimi
RG	75	Anthony Bradford	64	Christian Haynes
RT	72	Abraham Lucas	79	Amari Kight
TE	88	AJ Barner	81	Eric Saubert
QB	14	Sam Darnold	2	Drew Lock
FB	40	Robbie Ouzts	38	Brady Russell
RB	8	Jadarian Price (R)	27	Emmanuel Wilson

DEFENSE

DT	99	Leonard Williams	90	Jarran Reed
NT	91	Byron Murphy II	95	Brandon Pili
DE	0	DeMarcus Lawrence	94	Mike Morris
EDGE	58	Derick Hall	56	Dante Fowler Jr.
MLB	13	Ernest Jones IV	52	Patrick O'Connell
WLB	32	Drake Thomas	48	Tyrice Knight
CB	21	Devon Witherspoon	28	Nehemiah Pritchett
CB	29	Josh Jobe	1	Julian Neal (R)
S	3	Nick Emmanwori	7	Uchenna Nwosu
S	9	Bud Clark (R)	39	Ty Okada
S	20	Julian Love	24	Rodney Thomas II

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Jason Myers	KR	22	Rashid Shaheed
P	4	Michael Dickson	PR	22	Rashid Shaheed

-155 The Seahawks' defense allowed -155 rushing yards over expected last year, best in the NFL by 47 yards, despite having the second-lowest number of stacked-box attempts.

DRAFT CLASS

GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Jadarian Price	RB	5-11	209	Notre Dame
2	Bud Clark	S	6-1	188	TCU
3	Julian Neal	CB	6-2	203	Arkansas
5	Beau Stephens	G	6-5	315	Iowa
6	Emmanuel Henderson Jr.	WR	6-1	185	Kansas
7	Andre Fuller	CB	6-1	200	Toledo
7	Deven Eastern	NT	6-5	320	Minnesota
7	Michael Dansby	CB	5-11	185	Arizona

Jadarian Price joined Curt Warner (1983), Shaun Alexander (2000) and Rashaad Penny (2018) as the only running backs the Seahawks have selected in the first round in their 51-year history. The coaches think Price is perfectly suited for their outside-zone run scheme to replace departed Super Bowl MVP Kenneth Walker III. Bud Clark and Julian Neal can play multiple spots in the secondary — and they can tackle. Beau Stephens could challenge Anthony Bradford for the starting job at right guard. Emmanuel Henderson Jr. was a special-teams force as a returner and punt gunner in college. Deven Eastern provides much-needed depth behind tackle Byron Murphy II and 33-year-old Jarran Reed on the defensive interior. All eight picks have confidence to the point of bravado, a point of emphasis for the Seahawks.

FANTASY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

WHO'S NO. 1?

JAHMYR GIBBS

RB | DETROIT

YOU COULD MAKE A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR BIJAN ROBINSON, but I'm giving the edge to Gibbs. David Montgomery was traded to Houston, and while the Lions signed Isiah Pacheco to help fill that void, he's been injury prone and doesn't quite bring the same level of thunder Montgomery did as Gibbs' chance-of-pace running mate. Gibbs put up massive PPR numbers the few times Montgomery was out of the lineup, and his usage increased when HC Dan Campbell took over play-calling duties last season, even with Montgomery still in the lineup. It's unclear whether or not Campbell will remain the play-caller in 2026, but even if he hands that off to another coach, I'm betting on Gibbs taking his fantasy value to an even higher level in 2026.

— **LUKE EASTERLING** Athlon Senior Editor

FIRST OFF, I REALLY DON'T WANT THE NO. 1 PICK IN MY DRAFT. There are at least four players worthy of the first pick, so I'd much rather have the No. 4 overall pick and then pick No. 21 in Round 2 — as opposed to the No. 1 pick and then the No. 24 pick in Round 2. That said, if I had to make the No. 1 pick, I'd go Jahmyr Gibbs. Yes, Bijan Robinson had slightly better numbers last season, but Gibbs stands to get even more of the workload with David Montgomery gone. Montgomery had 182 touches last season (for 908 yards and eight touchdowns), and new Lions addition Isiah Pacheco will not get more than half of those. Montgomery was Detroit's goal-line back. Pacheco was a lousy goal-line back in Kansas City, so that means more opportunity for Gibbs. Gibbs had 18 total touchdowns last season, and he stands to improve on that number. I'm expecting more than 2,000 scrimmage yards and 20-plus touchdowns for Gibbs.

— **CRAIG ELLENPORT** Athlon Senior Editor

JAHMYR GIBBS DIDN'T FINISH NO. 1 IN ATHLON SPORTS' FANTASY SCORING among non-quarterbacks last season. In fact, he was third at his own position, behind Christian McCaffrey and Bijan Robinson. And while you can't go wrong taking any of these guys with the No. 1 pick, this year, my vote goes to Gibbs. Yes, McCaffrey lapped his RB peers in scoring thanks to an insane 102 receptions. However, I think it's unrealistic to expect an encore. For one, he will be 30 this season, a dreaded milestone for RBs, and San Francisco 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan has also made it clear that he would like to reduce McCaffrey's workload. As for Robinson, while he's clearly the focal point of the Falcons' offense (and five years younger than McCaffrey), he barely outscored Gibbs last season despite amassing 46 more touches. In three seasons, Gibbs has scored 49 total touchdowns, averaged five yards per carry, and established himself as a reliable, if not dangerous, receiver. He has a new tag-team partner in Isiah Pacheco, but I still expect Gibbs to receive the (ahem) lion's share of touches. Opportunity plus big-play potential in a fantasy-friendly offense? Sign me up.

– **MARK ROSS** Athlon Contributing Editor

LON HORWEDEL-IMAGN IMAGES

BIJAN
ROBINSON
RB | ATLANTA

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT DAVID MONTGOMERY'S ABSENCE opening up more carries for Jahmyr Gibbs, but it works the exact same way in Atlanta with Tyler Allgeier off to Arizona. Brian Robinson Jr. simply lingered too long in free agency to be a major threat to the more important B. Robinson here. New Falcons head coach Kevin Stefanski's offenses have always been run-first, and Atlanta had so little draft capital this year that the team couldn't add much in the way of target competition for the trio of Robinson, Kyle Pitts Sr. and Drake London. The idea of some of the innovative screens that Stefanski was able to scheme up to get Shedeur Sanders some passing yards last year is pretty enticing when you pair it with one of the most dangerous players in the NFL in the open field.

— **RIVERS McCOWN** Athlon Fantasy Contributor

ROBINSON'S EFFICIENCY AND OUTPUT HAVE INCREASED EACH YEAR OF HIS CAREER, and there's reason to believe that 2026 could be his best season yet. Head coach Kevin Stefanski's arrival in Atlanta should raise the floor of an offense that Robinson has elevated since he was drafted in the first round in 2023. And Tyler Allgeier's departure could see Robinson's touch total creep closer to 400 and his touchdown output increase as well. That's the recipe for the RB1 campaign he's been building toward and came close to realizing last season. Robinson's uptick in receiving work coincided with the year Michael Penix Jr. took over under center. And backup Tua Tagovailoa is no stranger to involving his running backs in the passing game either. Between his consistent top-flight rushing output and floor of 50-plus receptions, the only thing missing for Robinson is a true touchdown spike. With a sky-high floor and seemingly no ceiling, Robinson should be the 1.01 in drafts this season — and possibly for years to come.

— **KYLE WOOD** Athlon Senior Editor

JA'MARR
CHASE
WR | CINCINNATI

WHEN YOU'RE PICKING NO. 1 OVERALL IN FANTASY, SIMPLY NOT WHIFFING CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE between competing for the title and having to do some stupid humiliation ritual because you finished dead last. Few players are safer with as much league-winning upside as Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase. He does everything fantasy managers can reasonably expect from an elite playmaker. The Bengals run a proven offense with an elite quarterback, and fellow wideout Tee Higgins can shield Chase to a degree. The only real knock is Joe Burrow's durability. However, I'm confident No. 9 will stay healthy this year. His line played better in 2025, and how many times can a freak injury strike down the same guy?! In PPR, Chase edges out Bijan Robinson for me, mostly because Atlanta has a new system, quarterback and right tackle to worry about. I'd make a stronger argument for the running back in non-PPR, however.

— **CORY BONINI** Athlon Fantasy Editor

JUSTIN
JEFFERSON
WR | MINNESOTA

I'LL ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I'M CRAWLING WAY OUT ON A LIMB HERE. After all, Jefferson is coming off career lows in receiving yardage (1,048), yards per reception (12.5) and touchdown receptions (a paltry two). But let's remember who was throwing him the football. The J.J. McCarthy experiment no doubt ruined a lot of fantasy seasons for a lot of owners. Well, a new day has dawned in the Twin Cities. Vikings head coach and QB reclamation specialist Kevin O'Connell has a new project on his hands, and I expect him to have the same level of success with Kyler Murray that he enjoyed with Sam Darnold. I would argue that Murray, with his 67.1% career completion rate, is slightly underrated as a passer, and he'll love looking Jefferson's way, especially on those off-schedule plays where Murray can use his legs to give JJ time to get open. Jefferson is the most talented receiver in football, and merely competent quarterback play will give him the chance to prove it yet again.

— **ROB DOSTER** Athlon Managing Editor

OPPOSITE: KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES; FROM TOP: NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES; YANNICK PETERHANS

FANTASY POSITION RANKINGS

QUARTERBACKS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Josh Allen	BUF
☐	2	Dak Prescott	DAL
☐	3	Joe Burrow	CIN
☐	4	Caleb Williams	CHI
☐	5	Lamar Jackson	BAL
☐	6	Bo Nix	DEN
☐	7	Drake Maye	NE
☐	8	Trevor Lawrence	JAC
☐	9	Jalen Hurts	PHI
☐	10	Justin Herbert	LAC
☐	11	Jared Goff	DET
☐	12	Jayden Daniels	WAS
☐	13	Matthew Stafford	LAR
☐	14	Baker Mayfield	TB
☐	15	Jordan Love	GB
☐	16	Kyler Murray	MIN
☐	17	Jaxson Dart	NYG
☐	18	Sam Darnold	SEA
☐	19	Brock Purdy	SF
☐	20	Tyler Shough	NO
☐	21	Patrick Mahomes	KC
☐	22	C.J. Stroud	HOU
☐	23	Bryce Young	CAR
☐	24	Aaron Rodgers	PIT
☐	25	Daniel Jones	IND
☐	26	Cam Ward	TEN
☐	27	Jacoby Brissett	ARI
☐	28	Malik Willis	MIA
☐	29	Geno Smith	NYJ
☐	30	Shedeur Sanders	CLE
☐	31	Tua Tagovailoa	ATL
☐	32	Kirk Cousins	LV
☐	33	Fernando Mendoza (R)	LV
☐	34	Justin Fields	KC
☐	35	Deshaun Watson	CLE
☐	36	Michael Penix Jr.	ATL
☐	37	Mac Jones	SF
☐	38	Quinn Ewers	MIA
☐	39	Jameis Winston	NYG
☐	40	Riley Leonard	IND
☐	41	Carson Beck (R)	ARI
☐	42	Cade Klubnik (R)	NYJ
☐	43	Drew Allar (R)	PIT
☐	44	J.J. McCarthy	MIN
☐	45	Tyler Huntley	BAL
☐	46	Mitchell Trubisky	TEN
☐	47	Jarrett Stidham	DEN
☐	48	Will Howard	PIT
☐	49	Taylen Green (R)	CLE
☐	50	Ty Simpson (R)	LAR

RUNNING BACKS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Bijan Robinson	ATL
☐	2	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET
☐	3	Christian McCaffrey	SF
☐	4	Jonathan Taylor	IND
☐	5	Ashton Jeanty	LV
☐	6	James Cook III	BUF
☐	7	De'Von Achane	MIA
☐	8	Breece Hall	NYJ
☐	9	Javonte Williams	DAL
☐	10	Saquon Barkley	PHI
☐	11	Josh Jacobs	GB
☐	12	Kyren Williams	LAR
☐	13	Kenneth Walker III	KC
☐	14	Omarion Hampton	LAC
☐	15	Derrick Henry	BAL
☐	16	Chase Brown	CIN
☐	17	RJ Harvey	DEN
☐	18	TreVeyon Henderson	NE
☐	19	D'Andre Swift	CHI
☐	20	Quinshon Judkins	CLE
☐	21	Travis Etienne Jr.	NO
☐	22	Bucky Irving	TB
☐	23	Chuba Hubbard	CAR
☐	24	Cam Skattebo	NYG
☐	25	Jeremiyah Love (R)	ARI
☐	26	Rico Dowdle	PIT
☐	27	David Montgomery	HOU
☐	28	Tony Pollard	TEN
☐	29	Kyle Monangai	CHI
☐	30	Alvin Kamara	NO
☐	31	Jaylen Warren	PIT
☐	32	Jadarian Price (R)	SEA
☐	33	Rachaad White	WAS
☐	34	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE
☐	35	Woody Marks	HOU
☐	36	Aaron Jones Sr.	MIN
☐	37	Tyjae Spears	TEN
☐	38	Bhayshul Tuten	JAC
☐	39	Dylan Sampson	CLE
☐	40	Kenneth Gainwell	TB
☐	41	J.K. Dobbins	DEN
☐	42	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	NYG
☐	43	Blake Corum	LAR
☐	44	Jacory Croskey-Merritt	WAS
☐	45	James Conner	ARI
☐	46	Jordan Mason	MIN
☐	47	Isiah Pacheco	DET
☐	48	Isaiah Davis	NYJ
☐	49	Justice Hill	BAL
☐	50	Zach Charbonnet	SEA
☐	51	Tyler Allgeier	ARI
☐	52	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	JAC
☐	53	Devin Singletary	NYG
☐	54	Chris Brooks	GB
☐	55	LeQuint Allen Jr.	JAC
☐	56	Kimani Vidal	LAC
☐	57	Ty Johnson	BUF
☐	58	Emanuel Wilson	SEA
☐	59	Jaylen Wright	MIA
☐	60	Samaje Perine	CIN
☐	61	Jaydon Blue	DAL
☐	62	Demond Claiborne (R)	MIN
☐	63	Kaelon Black (R)	SF
☐	64	Brian Robinson Jr.	ATL
☐	65	Adam Randall (R)	BAL
☐	66	Ray Davis	BUF
☐	67	Kaytron Allen (R)	WAS
☐	68	Jonathon Brooks	CAR
☐	69	Brashard Smith	KC
☐	70	Sean Tucker	TB
☐	71	Mike Washington Jr. (R)	LV
☐	72	Trevor Etienne	CAR
☐	73	Jerome Ford	WAS
☐	74	DJ Giddens	IND
☐	75	Jonah Coleman (R)	DEN
☐	76	Nicholas Singleton (R)	TEN
☐	77	Emari Demercado	KC
☐	78	Ollie Gordon II	MIA
☐	79	Tank Bigsby	PHI
☐	80	Devin Neal	NO

FROM LEFT: RON CHENOY-IMAGN IMAGES; JOE CAMPOREALE-IMAGN IMAGES

WIDE RECEIVERS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Ja’Marr Chase	CIN
☐	2	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	SEA
☐	3	Puka Nacua	LAR
☐	4	Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET
☐	5	Justin Jefferson	MIN
☐	6	CeeDee Lamb	DAL
☐	7	Emeka Egbuka	TB
☐	8	Tetairoa McMillan	CAR
☐	9	George Pickens	DAL
☐	10	Drake London	ATL
☐	11	Chris Olave	NO
☐	12	Nico Collins	HOU
☐	13	Zay Flowers	BAL
☐	14	Terry McLaurin	WAS
☐	15	A.J. Brown	NE
☐	16	DeVonta Smith	PHI
☐	17	Courtland Sutton	DEN
☐	18	Malik Nabers	NYG
☐	19	Luther Burden III	CHI
☐	20	Brian Thomas Jr.	JAC
☐	21	Ladd McConkey	LAC
☐	22	Garrett Wilson	NYJ
☐	23	Jameson Williams	DET
☐	24	Tee Higgins	CIN
☐	25	Davante Adams	LAR
☐	26	DK Metcalf	PIT
☐	27	DJ Moore	BUF
☐	28	Rome Odunze	CHI
☐	29	Mike Evans	SF
☐	30	Rashee Rice	KC
☐	31	Jaylen Waddle	DEN
☐	32	Michael Pittman Jr.	PIT
☐	33	Marvin Harrison Jr.	ARI
☐	34	Alec Pierce	IND
☐	35	Jayden Reed	GB
☐	36	Michael Wilson	ARI
☐	37	Chris Godwin	TB
☐	38	Jakobi Meyers	JAC
☐	39	Jerry Jeudy	CLE
☐	40	Josh Downs	IND
☐	41	Christian Watson	GB
☐	42	Parker Washington	JAC
☐	43	Jordan Addison	MIN
☐	44	Xavier Worthy	KC
☐	45	Quentin Johnston	LAC
☐	46	Romeo Doubs	NE
☐	47	Wan'Dale Robinson	TEN
☐	48	Jordyn Tyson (R)	NO
☐	49	Khalil Shakir	BUF
☐	50	Tre Tucker	LV
☐	51	Matthew Golden	GB
☐	52	Jayden Higgins	HOU
☐	53	Rashid Shaheed	SEA
☐	54	Tre' Harris	LAC
☐	55	Makai Lemon (R)	PHI
☐	56	Carnell Tate (R)	TEN
☐	57	Ricky Pearsall	SF
☐	58	Jack Bech	LV
☐	59	Antonio Williams (R)	WAS
☐	60	Troy Franklin	DEN
☐	61	KC Concepcion (R)	CLE
☐	62	Germie Bernard (R)	PIT
☐	63	Rashod Bateman	BAL
☐	64	Jauan Jennings	MIN
☐	65	Cooper Kupp	SEA
☐	66	Andrei Iosivas	CIN
☐	67	Xavier Legette	CAR
☐	68	Jalen Coker	CAR
☐	69	Ryan Flournoy	DAL
☐	70	Jalen McMillan	TB
☐	71	Omar Cooper Jr. (R)	NYJ
☐	72	Jalen Nailor	LV
☐	73	Kayshon Boutte	NE
☐	74	Caleb Douglas (R)	MIA
☐	75	Isaac TeSlaa	DET
☐	76	Keon Coleman	BUF
☐	77	Adonai Mitchell	NYJ
☐	78	Malik Washington	MIA
☐	79	Luke McCaffrey	WAS
☐	80	Elic Ayomanor	TEN
☐	81	Jaylin Noel	HOU
☐	82	Chimere Dike	TEN
☐	83	Dontayvion Wicks	PHI
☐	84	Jahan Dotson	ATL
☐	85	CJ Daniels (R)	LAR
☐	86	Christian Kirk	SF
☐	87	Darius Slayton	NYG
☐	88	Tank Dell	HOU
☐	89	Denzel Boston (R)	CLE
☐	90	Hollywood Brown	PHI
☐	91	Tyquan Thornton	KC
☐	92	Kyle Williams	NE
☐	93	Calvin Ridley	TEN
☐	94	DeMario Douglas	NE
☐	95	Devontez Walker	BAL
☐	96	Dont'e Thornton Jr.	LV
☐	97	Chris Brazzell II (R)	CAR
☐	98	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine	IND
☐	99	Tez Johnson	TB
☐	100	Travis Hunter	JAC

TIGHT ENDS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Trey McBride	ARI
☐	2	Brock Bowers	LV
☐	3	Tyler Warren	IND
☐	4	Colston Loveland	CHI
☐	5	Harold Fannin Jr.	CLE
☐	6	Kyle Pitts Sr.	ATL
☐	7	Travis Kelce	KC
☐	8	Sam LaPorta	DET
☐	9	Jake Ferguson	DAL
☐	10	Mark Andrews	BAL
☐	11	Juwan Johnson	NO
☐	12	George Kittle	SF
☐	13	Dalton Kincaid	BUF
☐	14	Tucker Kraft	GB
☐	15	Chig Okonkwo	WAS
☐	16	Hunter Henry	NE
☐	17	Pat Freiermuth	PIT
☐	18	Dalton Schultz	HOU
☐	19	Brenton Strange	JAC
☐	20	Isaiah Likely	NYG
☐	21	Cade Otton	TB
☐	22	Dallas Goedert	PHI
☐	23	Kenyon Sadiq (R)	NYJ
☐	24	AJ Barner	SEA
☐	25	Gunnar Helm	TEN
☐	26	David Njoku	LAC
☐	27	T.J. Hockenson	MIN
☐	28	Ja’Tavion Sanders	CAR
☐	29	Colby Parkinson	LAR
☐	30	Jake Tonges	SF
☐	31	Mike Gesicki	CIN
☐	32	Oronde Gadsden	LAC
☐	33	Evan Engram	DEN
☐	34	Cole Kmet	CHI
☐	35	Dawson Knox	BUF
☐	36	Theo Johnson	NYG
☐	37	Matt Hibner (R)	BAL
☐	38	Greg Dulcich	MIA
☐	39	Luke Musgrave	GB
☐	40	Tyler Higbee	LAR

KICKERS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Ka'imi Fairbairn	HOU
☐	2	Jason Myers	SEA
☐	3	Brandon Aubrey	DAL
☐	4	Cameron Dicker	LAC
☐	5	Chase McLaughlin	TB
☐	6	Will Reichard	MIN
☐	7	Jake Bates	DET
☐	8	Jason Sanders	NYG
☐	9	Cam Little	JAC
☐	10	Tyler Bass	BUF
☐	11	Harrison Butker	KC
☐	12	Wil Lutz	DEN
☐	13	Tyler Loop	BAL
☐	14	Chris Boswell	PIT
☐	15	Harrison Mevis	LAR
☐	16	Blake Grupe	IND
☐	17	Andy Borregales	NE
☐	18	Charlie Smyth	NO
☐	19	Cairo Santos	CHI
☐	20	Trey Smack (R)	GB
☐	21	Nick Folk	ATL
☐	22	Eddy Piñeiro	SF
☐	23	Evan McPherson	CIN
☐	24	Joey Slye	TEN
☐	25	Chad Ryland	ARI
☐	26	Matt Gay	LV
☐	27	Jake Elliott	PHI
☐	28	Ryan Fitzgerald	CAR

DEFENSE/ST

	Rk	Team
☐	1	Rams
☐	2	Broncos
☐	3	Bills
☐	4	Texans
☐	5	Vikings
☐	6	Bears
☐	7	Seahawks
☐	8	Steelers
☐	9	Ravens
☐	10	Chargers
☐	11	Raiders
☐	12	Browns
☐	13	Lions
☐	14	Eagles
☐	15	Packers
☐	16	Panthers
☐	17	Patriots
☐	18	Jaguars
☐	19	Titans
☐	20	Commanders
☐	21	Saints
☐	22	Cowboys
☐	23	Giants
☐	24	Falcons
☐	25	Buccaneers
☐	26	Colts
☐	27	Bengals
☐	28	49ers
☐	29	Chiefs
☐	30	Jets
☐	31	Cardinals
☐	32	Dolphins

JOSEPH MAIORANA-IMAGN IMAGES

TOP 280
FANTASY BIG BOARD

FOR SEASON-LONG
FANTASY ADVICE VISIT
ATHLONSPORTS.COM

JA'MARR CHASE

KATIE STRATMAN-IMAGN IMAGES

	Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐	1	Ja'Marr Chase	WR	CIN
☐	2	Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL
☐	3	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	DET
☐	4	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	SEA
☐	5	Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF
☐	6	Puka Nacua	WR	LAR
☐	7	Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	DET
☐	8	Justin Jefferson	WR	MIN
☐	9	Jonathan Taylor	RB	IND
☐	10	Ashton Jeanty	RB	LV
☐	11	James Cook III	RB	BUF
☐	12	De'Von Achane	RB	MIA
☐	13	CeeDee Lamb	WR	DAL
☐	14	Emeka Egbuka	WR	TB
☐	15	Tetairoa McMillan	WR	CAR
☐	16	Breece Hall	RB	NYJ
☐	17	Javonte Williams	RB	DAL
☐	18	Saquon Barkley	RB	PHI
☐	19	Josh Jacobs	RB	GB
☐	20	Kyren Williams	RB	LAR
☐	21	George Pickens	WR	DAL
☐	22	Drake London	WR	ATL
☐	23	Kenneth Walker III	RB	KC
☐	24	Omarion Hampton	RB	LAC
☐	25	Derrick Henry	RB	BAL
☐	26	Trey McBride	TE	ARI
☐	27	Chris Olave	WR	NO
☐	28	Chase Brown	RB	CIN
☐	29	RJ Harvey	RB	DEN
☐	30	Nico Collins	WR	HOU
☐	31	Josh Allen	QB	BUF
☐	32	Zay Flowers	WR	BAL
☐	33	Terry McLaurin	WR	WAS
☐	34	A.J. Brown	WR	NE
☐	35	Brock Bowers	TE	LV
☐	36	TreVeyon Henderson	RB	NE
☐	37	DeVonta Smith	WR	PHI
☐	38	Tyler Warren	TE	IND
☐	39	Courtland Sutton	WR	DEN
☐	40	D'Andre Swift	RB	CHI
☐	41	Malik Nabers	WR	NYG
☐	42	Colston Loveland	TE	CHI
☐	43	Quinshon Judkins	RB	CLE
☐	44	Luther Burden III	WR	CHI
☐	45	Brian Thomas Jr.	WR	JAC
☐	46	Ladd McConkey	WR	LAC
☐	47	Garrett Wilson	WR	NYJ
☐	48	Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	NO
☐	49	Bucky Irving	RB	TB
☐	50	Jameson Williams	WR	DET
☐	51	Tee Higgins	WR	CIN
☐	52	Harold Fannin Jr.	TE	CLE
☐	53	Davante Adams	WR	LAR
☐	54	Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR
☐	55	Cam Skattebo	RB	NYG
☐	56	Jeremiyah Love (R)	RB	ARI
☐	57	Dak Prescott	QB	DAL
☐	58	Joe Burrow	QB	CIN
☐	59	DK Metcalf	WR	PIT
☐	60	DJ Moore	WR	BUF
☐	61	Rome Odunze	WR	CHI
☐	62	Mike Evans	WR	SF
☐	63	Caleb Williams	QB	CHI
☐	64	Lamar Jackson	QB	BAL
☐	65	Rico Dowdle	RB	PIT
☐	66	David Montgomery	RB	HOU
☐	67	Tony Pollard	RB	TEN
☐	68	Kyle Monangai	RB	CHI
☐	69	Rashee Rice	WR	KC
☐	70	Bo Nix	QB	DEN
☐	71	Jaylen Waddle	WR	DEN
☐	72	Kyle Pitts Sr.	TE	ATL
☐	73	Alvin Kamara	RB	NO
☐	74	Jaylen Warren	RB	PIT
☐	75	Jadarian Price Jr. (R)	RB	SEA
☐	76	Michael Pittman Jr.	WR	PIT
☐	77	Marvin Harrison Jr.	WR	ARI
☐	78	Drake Maye	QB	NE
☐	79	Alec Pierce	WR	IND
☐	80	Jayden Reed	WR	GB
☐	81	Michael Wilson	WR	ARI
☐	82	Trevor Lawrence	QB	JAC
☐	83	Travis Kelce	TE	KC
☐	84	Jalen Hurts	QB	PHI
☐	85	Justin Herbert	QB	LAC
☐	86	Chris Godwin	WR	TB
☐	87	Jakobi Meyers	WR	JAC
☐	88	Rachaad White	RB	WAS
☐	89	Sam LaPorta	TE	DET
☐	90	Jerry Jeudy	WR	CLE
☐	91	Jared Goff	QB	DET
☐	92	Josh Downs	WR	IND
☐	93	Jake Ferguson	TE	DAL
☐	94	Jayden Daniels	QB	WAS
☐	95	Matthew Stafford	QB	LAR
☐	96	Rhamondre Stevenson	RB	NE
☐	97	Woody Marks	RB	HOU
☐	98	Mark Andrews	TE	BAL
☐	99	Christian Watson	WR	GB
☐	100	Aaron Jones Sr.	RB	MIN
☐	101	Tyjae Spears	RB	TEN
☐	102	Bhayshul Tuten	RB	JAC
☐	103	Baker Mayfield	QB	TB
☐	104	Parker Washington	WR	JAC
☐	105	Juwan Johnson	TE	NO
☐	106	George Kittle	TE	SF
☐	107	Jordan Love	QB	GB
☐	108	Kyler Murray	QB	MIN
☐	109	Jaxson Dart	QB	NYG
☐	110	Jordan Addison	WR	MIN
☐	111	Xavier Worthy	WR	KC
☐	112	Quentin Johnston	WR	LAC
☐	113	Romeo Doubs	WR	NE
☐	114	Dalton Kincaid	TE	BUF

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐ 115	Tucker Kraft	TE	GB
☐ 116	Wan'Dale Robinson	WR	TEN
☐ 117	Jordyn Tyson (R)	WR	NO
☐ 118	Sam Darnold	QB	SEA
☐ 119	Khalil Shakir	WR	BUF
☐ 120	Brock Purdy	QB	SF
☐ 121	Tre Tucker	WR	LV
☐ 122	Matthew Golden	WR	GB
☐ 123	Dylan Sampson	RB	CLE
☐ 124	Kenneth Gainwell	RB	TB
☐ 125	J.K. Dobbins	RB	DEN
☐ 126	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	RB	NYG
☐ 127	Blake Corum	RB	LAR
☐ 128	Jayden Higgins	WR	HOU
☐ 129	Chig Okonkwo	TE	WAS
☐ 130	Jacory Croskey-Merritt	RB	WAS
☐ 131	James Conner	RB	ARI
☐ 132	Jordan Mason	RB	MIN
☐ 133	Tyler Shough	QB	NO
☐ 134	Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC
☐ 135	Hunter Henry	TE	NE
☐ 136	Los Angeles Rams	DST	LAR
☐ 137	Denver Broncos	DST	DEN
☐ 138	Rashid Shaheed	WR	SEA
☐ 139	Tre' Harris	WR	LAC
☐ 140	Makai Lemon (R)	WR	PHI
☐ 141	Carnell Tate (R)	WR	TEN
☐ 142	Isiah Pacheco	RB	DET
☐ 143	Pat Freiermuth	TE	PIT
☐ 144	Dalton Schultz	TE	HOU
☐ 145	Brenton Strange	TE	JAC
☐ 146	Isaiah Likely	TE	NYG
☐ 147	Ricky Pearsall	WR	SF
☐ 148	Jack Bech	WR	LV
☐ 149	Antonio Williams (R)	WR	WAS
☐ 150	Buffalo Bills	DST	BUF
☐ 151	Houston Texans	DST	HOU
☐ 152	Troy Franklin	WR	DEN
☐ 153	KC Concepcion (R)	WR	CLE
☐ 154	Cade Otton	TE	TB
☐ 155	Dallas Goedert	TE	PHI
☐ 156	Kenyon Sadiq (R)	TE	NYJ
☐ 157	C.J. Stroud	QB	HOU
☐ 158	Bryce Young	QB	CAR
☐ 159	AJ Barner	TE	SEA
☐ 160	Gunnar Helm	TE	TEN
☐ 161	Germie Bernard (R)	WR	PIT
☐ 162	Minnesota Vikings	DST	MIN
☐ 163	Chicago Bears	DST	CHI
☐ 164	Seattle Seahawks	DST	SEA
☐ 165	Isaiah Davis	RB	NYJ
☐ 166	Aaron Rodgers	QB	PIT
☐ 167	Justice Hill	RB	BAL
☐ 168	Zach Charbonnet	RB	SEA
☐ 169	Tyler Allgeier	RB	ARI
☐ 170	Ka'imi Fairbairn	K	HOU
☐ 171	Jason Myers	K	SEA
☐ 172	Rashod Bateman	WR	BAL
☐ 173	Jauan Jennings	WR	MIN
☐ 174	Pittsburgh Steelers	DST	PIT
☐ 175	Baltimore Ravens	DST	BAL
☐ 176	Cooper Kupp	WR	SEA
☐ 177	Brandon Aubrey	K	DAL
☐ 178	Andrei Iosivas	WR	CIN
☐ 179	Xavier Legette	WR	CAR
☐ 180	David Njoku	TE	LAC
☐ 181	Jalen Coker	WR	CAR
☐ 182	T.J. Hockenson	TE	MIN
☐ 183	Ja'Tavion Sanders	TE	CAR
☐ 184	Colby Parkinson	TE	LAR
☐ 185	Ryan Flournoy	WR	DAL
☐ 186	Jalen McMillan	WR	TB
☐ 187	Daniel Jones	QB	IND
☐ 188	Jake Tonges	TE	SF
☐ 189	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	RB	JAC
☐ 190	Devin Singletary	RB	NYG
☐ 191	Chris Brooks	RB	GB
☐ 192	LeQuint Allen Jr.	RB	JAC
☐ 193	Kimani Vidal	RB	LAC
☐ 194	Cameron Dicker	K	LAC
☐ 195	Chase McLaughlin	K	TB
☐ 196	Omar Cooper Jr. (R)	WR	NYJ
☐ 197	Ty Johnson	RB	BUF
☐ 198	Emanuel Wilson	RB	SEA
☐ 199	Jaylen Wright	RB	MIA
☐ 200	Samaje Perine	RB	CIN
☐ 201	Jalen Nailor	WR	LV
☐ 202	Kayshon Boutte	WR	NE
☐ 203	Jaydon Blue	RB	DAL
☐ 204	Demond Claiborne (R)	RB	MIN
☐ 205	Kaelon Black (R)	RB	SF
☐ 206	Cam Ward	QB	TEN
☐ 207	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	ATL
☐ 208	Adam Randall (R)	RB	BAL
☐ 209	Caleb Douglas (R)	WR	MIA
☐ 210	Mike Gesicki	TE	CIN
☐ 211	Isaac TeSlaa	WR	DET
☐ 212	Ray Davis	RB	BUF
☐ 213	Kaytron Allen (R)	RB	WAS
☐ 214	Jonathon Brooks	RB	CAR
☐ 215	Will Reichard	K	MIN
☐ 216	Jake Bates	K	DET
☐ 217	Keon Coleman	WR	BUF
☐ 218	Adonai Mitchell	WR	NYJ
☐ 219	Malik Washington	WR	MIA
☐ 220	Brashard Smith	RB	KC
☐ 221	Sean Tucker	RB	TB
☐ 222	Mike Washington Jr. (R)	RB	LV
☐ 223	Trevor Etienne	RB	CAR
☐ 224	Luke McCaffrey	WR	WAS
☐ 225	Jerome Ford	RB	WAS
☐ 226	DJ Giddens	RB	IND
☐ 227	Jason Sanders	K	NYG
☐ 228	Cam Little	K	JAC
☐ 229	Oronde Gadsden	TE	LAC
☐ 230	Evan Engram	TE	DEN
☐ 231	Elic Ayomanor	WR	TEN
☐ 232	Los Angeles Chargers	DST	LAC
☐ 233	Las Vegas Raiders	DST	LV
☐ 234	Jonah Coleman (R)	RB	DEN
☐ 235	Nicholas Singleton (R)	RB	TEN
☐ 236	Jacoby Brissett	QB	ARI
☐ 237	Malik Willis	QB	MIA
☐ 238	Geno Smith	QB	NYJ
☐ 239	Mar'Shawn Lloyd	RB	GB
☐ 240	Jaylin Noel	WR	HOU
☐ 241	Chimere Dike	WR	TEN
☐ 242	Cleveland Browns	DST	CLE
☐ 243	Tyler Bass	K	BUF
☐ 244	Dontayvion Wicks	WR	PHI
☐ 245	Detroit Lions	DST	DET
☐ 246	Philadelphia Eagles	DST	PHI
☐ 247	Harrison Butker	K	KC
☐ 248	Wil Lutz	K	DEN
☐ 249	Tyler Loop	K	BAL
☐ 250	Chris Boswell	K	PIT
☐ 251	Green Bay Packers	DST	GB
☐ 252	Cole Kmet	TE	CHI
☐ 253	Darius Slayton	WR	NYG
☐ 254	Jahan Dotson	WR	ATL
☐ 255	CJ Daniels (R)	WR	LAR
☐ 256	Christian Kirk	WR	SF
☐ 257	Harrison Mevis	K	LAR
☐ 258	Blake Grupe	K	IND
☐ 259	Andy Borregales	K	NE
☐ 260	Shedeur Sanders	QB	CLE
☐ 261	Carolina Panthers	DST	CAR
☐ 262	New England Patriots	DST	NE
☐ 263	Jacksonville Jaguars	DST	JAC
☐ 264	Tua Tagovailoa	QB	ATL
☐ 265	Tennessee Titans	DST	TEN
☐ 266	Tank Dell	WR	HOU
☐ 267	Dawson Knox	TE	BUF
☐ 268	Denzel Boston (R)	WR	CLE
☐ 269	Hollywood Brown	WR	PHI
☐ 270	Washington Commanders	DST	WAS
☐ 271	New Orleans Saints	DST	NO
☐ 272	Dallas Cowboys	DST	DAL
☐ 273	New York Giants	DST	NYG
☐ 274	Tyquan Thornton	WR	KC
☐ 275	Kyle Williams	WR	NE
☐ 276	Calvin Ridley	WR	TEN
☐ 277	DeMario Douglas	WR	NE
☐ 278	Theo Johnson	TE	NYG
☐ 279	Matt Hibner (R)	TE	BAL
☐ 280	Atlanta Falcons	DST	ATL

TOP 240
FANTASY WITH IDPs

FOR SEASON-LONG FANTASY ADVICE VISIT

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
☐ 1	Ja'Marr Chase (1)	WR	CIN
☐ 2	Bijan Robinson (1)	RB	ATL
☐ 3	Jahmyr Gibbs (2)	RB	DET
☐ 4	Jaxon Smith-Njigba (2)	WR	SEA
☐ 5	Christian McCaffrey (3)	RB	SF
☐ 6	Puka Nacua (3)	WR	LAR
☐ 7	Amon-Ra St. Brown (4)	WR	DET
☐ 8	Justin Jefferson (5)	WR	MIN
☐ 9	Jonathan Taylor (4)	RB	IND
☐ 10	Ashton Jeanty (5)	RB	LV
☐ 11	James Cook III (6)	RB	BUF
☐ 12	De'Von Achane (7)	RB	MIA
☐ 13	CeeDee Lamb (6)	WR	DAL
☐ 14	Emeka Egbuka (7)	WR	TB
☐ 15	Tetairoa McMillan (8)	WR	CAR
☐ 16	Breece Hall (8)	RB	NYJ
☐ 17	Javonte Williams (9)	RB	DAL
☐ 18	Saquon Barkley (10)	RB	PHI
☐ 19	Josh Jacobs (11)	RB	GB
☐ 20	Kyren Williams (12)	RB	LAR
☐ 21	George Pickens (9)	WR	DAL
☐ 22	Drake London (10)	WR	ATL
☐ 23	Kenneth Walker III (13)	RB	KC
☐ 24	Omarion Hampton (14)	RB	LAC
☐ 25	Derrick Henry (15)	RB	BAL
☐ 26	Trey McBride (1)	TE	ARI
☐ 27	Chris Olave (11)	WR	NO
☐ 28	Chase Brown (16)	RB	CIN
☐ 29	RJ Harvey (17)	RB	DEN
☐ 30	Nico Collins (12)	WR	HOU
☐ 31	Josh Allen (1)	QB	BUF
☐ 32	Zay Flowers (13)	WR	BAL
☐ 33	Terry McLaurin (14)	WR	WAS
☐ 34	A.J. Brown (15)	WR	NE
☐ 35	Brock Bowers (2)	TE	LV
☐ 36	TreVeyon Henderson (18)	RB	NE
☐ 37	DeVonta Smith (16)	WR	PHI
☐ 38	Tyler Warren (3)	TE	IND
☐ 39	Courtland Sutton (17)	WR	DEN
☐ 40	D'Andre Swift (19)	RB	CHI
☐ 41	Malik Nabers (18)	WR	NYG
☐ 42	Colston Loveland (4)	TE	CHI
☐ 43	Quinshon Judkins (20)	RB	CLE
☐ 44	Luther Burden III (19)	WR	CHI
☐ 45	Jack Campbell (1)	LB	DET
☐ 46	Brian Thomas Jr. (20)	WR	JAC
☐ 47	Ladd McConkey (21)	WR	LAC
☐ 48	Garrett Wilson (22)	WR	NYJ
☐ 49	Travis Etienne Jr. (21)	RB	NO
☐ 50	Carson Schwesinger (2)	LB	CLE
☐ 51	Bucky Irving (22)	RB	TB
☐ 52	Jameson Williams (23)	WR	DET
☐ 53	Tee Higgins (24)	WR	CIN
☐ 54	Harold Fannin Jr. (5)	TE	CLE
☐ 55	Davante Adams (25)	WR	LAR
☐ 56	Chuba Hubbard (23)	RB	CAR
☐ 57	Cam Skattebo (24)	RB	NYG
☐ 58	Jeremiyah Love (R) (25)	RB	ARI
☐ 59	Dak Prescott (2)	QB	DAL
☐ 60	Joe Burrow (3)	QB	CIN
☐ 61	DK Metcalf (26)	WR	PIT
☐ 62	Jordyn Brooks (3)	LB	MIA
☐ 63	Cedric Gray (4)	LB	TEN
☐ 64	DJ Moore (27)	WR	BUF
☐ 65	Rome Odunze (28)	WR	CHI
☐ 66	Mike Evans (29)	WR	SF
☐ 67	Caleb Williams (4)	QB	CHI
☐ 68	Lamar Jackson (5)	QB	BAL
☐ 69	Roquan Smith (5)	LB	BAL
☐ 70	T.J. Watt (1)	DL	PIT
☐ 71	Nick Bolton (6)	LB	KC
☐ 72	Zaire Franklin (7)	LB	GB
☐ 73	Rico Dowdle (26)	RB	PIT
☐ 74	Demetrius Knight Jr. (8)	LB	CIN
☐ 75	Fred Warner (9)	LB	SF
☐ 76	Nick Emmanwori (1)	DB	SEA
☐ 77	David Montgomery (27)	RB	HOU
☐ 78	Tony Pollard (28)	RB	TEN
☐ 79	Will Anderson Jr. (2)	DL	HOU
☐ 80	Brian Burns (3)	DL	NYG
☐ 81	Kyle Monangai (29)	RB	CHI
☐ 82	Rashee Rice (30)	WR	KC
☐ 83	Bo Nix (6)	QB	DEN
☐ 84	Zack Baun (10)	LB	PHI
☐ 85	Jaylen Waddle (31)	WR	DEN
☐ 86	Kyle Pitts Sr. (6)	TE	ATL
☐ 87	Cooper DeJean (2)	DB	PHI
☐ 88	Alvin Kamara (30)	RB	NO
☐ 89	Jessie Bates III (3)	DB	ATL
☐ 90	Foyesade Oluokun (11)	LB	JAC
☐ 91	Aidan Hutchinson (4)	DL	DET
☐ 92	Myles Garrett (5)	DL	CLE
☐ 93	Jamien Sherwood (12)	LB	NYJ
☐ 94	Jaylen Warren (31)	RB	PIT
☐ 95	Jadarian Price (R) (32)	RB	SEA
☐ 96	Michael Pittman Jr. (32)	WR	PIT

TOP 65 IDPs

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
1	Jack Campbell (1)	LB	DET
2	Carson Schwesinger (2)	LB	CLE
3	Jordyn Brooks (3)	LB	MIA
4	Cedric Gray (4)	LB	TEN
5	Roquan Smith (5)	LB	BAL
6	T.J. Watt (1)	DL	PIT
7	Nick Bolton (6)	LB	KC
8	Zaire Franklin (7)	LB	GB
9	Dem. Knight Jr. (8)	LB	CIN
10	Fred Warner (9)	LB	SF
11	Nick Emmanwori (1)	DB	SEA
12	Will Anderson Jr. (2)	DL	HOU
13	Brian Burns (3)	DL	NYG
14	Zack Baun (10)	LB	PHI
15	Cooper DeJean (2)	DB	PHI
16	Jessie Bates III (3)	DB	ATL
17	Foyesade Oluokun (11)	LB	JAC
18	Aidan Hutchinson (4)	DL	DET
19	Myles Garrett (5)	DL	CLE
20	Jamien Sherwood (12)	LB	NYJ
21	Kyle Hamilton (4)	DB	BAL
22	Budda Baker (5)	DB	ARI
23	T.J. Edwards (13)	LB	CHI
24	Payton Wilson (14)	LB	PIT
25	Kaden Elliss (15)	LB	NO
26	Jihaad Campbell (16)	LB	PHI
27	Edgerrin Cooper (17)	LB	GB
28	Daiyan Henley (18)	LB	LAC
29	Sonny Styles (R) (19)	LB	WAS
30	Maxx Crosby (6)	DL	LV
31	Robert Spillane (20)	LB	NE
32	Tyrel Dodson (21)	LB	MIA
33	CJ Allen (R) (22)	LB	IND

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
☐ 97	**Marvin Harrison Jr.** (33)	**WR**	ARI
☐ 98	**Kyle Hamilton** (4)	**DB**	BAL
☐ 99	**Budda Baker** (5)	**DB**	ARI
☐ 100	**Drake Maye** (7)	**QB**	NE
☐ 101	**T.J. Edwards** (13)	**LB**	CHI
☐ 102	**Alec Pierce** (34)	**WR**	IND
☐ 103	**Jayden Reed** (35)	**WR**	GB
☐ 104	**Michael Wilson** (36)	**WR**	ARI
☐ 105	**Trevor Lawrence** (8)	**QB**	JAC
☐ 106	**Travis Kelce** (7)	**TE**	KC
☐ 107	**Jalen Hurts** (9)	**QB**	PHI
☐ 108	**Justin Herbert** (10)	**QB**	LAC
☐ 109	**Payton Wilson** (14)	**LB**	PIT
☐ 110	**Chris Godwin** (37)	**WR**	TB
☐ 111	**Jakobi Meyers** (38)	**WR**	JAC
☐ 112	**Rachaad White** (33)	**RB**	WAS
☐ 113	**Sam LaPorta** (8)	**TE**	DET
☐ 114	**Jerry Jeudy** (39)	**WR**	CLE
☐ 115	**Jared Goff** (11)	**QB**	DET
☐ 116	**Josh Downs** (40)	**WR**	IND
☐ 117	**Kaden Elliss** (15)	**LB**	NO
☐ 118	**Jihaad Campbell** (16)	**LB**	PHI
☐ 119	**Edgerrin Cooper** (17)	**LB**	GB
☐ 120	**Daiyan Henley** (18)	**LB**	LAC
☐ 121	**Sonny Styles** (R) (19)	**LB**	WAS
☐ 122	**Jake Ferguson** (9)	**TE**	DAL
☐ 123	**Jayden Daniels** (12)	**QB**	WAS
☐ 124	**Matthew Stafford** (13)	**QB**	LAR
☐ 125	**Maxx Crosby** (6)	**DL**	LV
☐ 126	**Rhamondre Stevenson** (34)	**RB**	NE
☐ 127	**Woody Marks** (35)	**RB**	HOU
☐ 128	**Mark Andrews** (10)	**TE**	BAL
☐ 129	**Robert Spillane** (20)	**LB**	NE
☐ 130	**Tyrel Dodson** (21)	**LB**	MIA
☐ 131	**CJ Allen** (R) (22)	**LB**	IND
☐ 132	**Christian Watson** (41)	**WR**	GB
☐ 133	**Nick Cross** (6)	**DB**	WAS
☐ 134	**Antoine Winfield Jr.** (7)	**DB**	TB
☐ 135	**Mike Sainristil** (8)	**DB**	WAS
☐ 136	**Chamarri Conner** (9)	**DB**	KC
☐ 137	**Aaron Jones Sr.** (36)	**RB**	MIN
☐ 138	**Tyjae Spears** (37)	**RB**	TEN
☐ 139	**Bhayshul Tuten** (38)	**RB**	JAC
☐ 140	**Baker Mayfield** (14)	**QB**	TB
☐ 141	**Parker Washington** (42)	**WR**	JAC
☐ 142	**Juwan Johnson** (11)	**TE**	NO
☐ 143	**George Kittle** (12)	**TE**	SF
☐ 144	**Xavier McKinney** (10)	**DB**	GB

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
☐ 145	**Derwin James Jr.** (11)	**DB**	LAC
☐ 146	**Jordan Love** (15)	**QB**	GB
☐ 147	**Kyler Murray** (16)	**QB**	MIN
☐ 148	**Jaxson Dart** (17)	**QB**	NYG
☐ 149	**Jeffery Simmons** (7)	**DL**	TEN
☐ 150	**Patrick Queen** (23)	**LB**	PIT
☐ 151	**Ernest Jones IV** (24)	**LB**	SEA
☐ 152	**Jordan Addison** (43)	**WR**	MIN
☐ 153	**Quay Walker** (25)	**LB**	LV
☐ 154	**Xavier Worthy** (44)	**WR**	KC
☐ 155	**Quentin Johnston** (45)	**WR**	LAC
☐ 156	**Romeo Doubs** (46)	**WR**	NE
☐ 157	**Dalton Kincaid** (13)	**TE**	BUF
☐ 158	**Tucker Kraft** (14)	**TE**	GB
☐ 159	**Tykee Smith** (12)	**DB**	TB
☐ 160	**Talanoa Hufanga** (13)	**DB**	DEN
☐ 161	**Devon Witherspoon** (14)	**DB**	SEA
☐ 162	**Kam Curl** (15)	**DB**	LAR
☐ 163	**Jordan Battle** (16)	**DB**	CIN
☐ 164	**Wan'Dale Robinson** (47)	**WR**	TEN
☐ 165	**Jordyn Tyson** (R) (48)	**WR**	NO
☐ 166	**Sam Darnold** (18)	**QB**	SEA
☐ 167	**Khalil Shakir** (49)	**WR**	BUF
☐ 168	**Brock Purdy** (19)	**QB**	SF
☐ 169	**Derrick Brown** (8)	**DL**	CAR
☐ 170	**Tre Tucker** (50)	**WR**	LV
☐ 171	**Matthew Golden** (51)	**WR**	GB
☐ 172	**Dylan Sampson** (39)	**RB**	CLE
☐ 173	**Kenneth Gainwell** (40)	**RB**	TB
☐ 174	**J.K. Dobbins** (41)	**RB**	DEN
☐ 175	**Tyrone Tracy Jr.** (42)	**RB**	NYG
☐ 176	**Blake Corum** (43)	**RB**	LAR
☐ 177	**Alex Anzalone** (26)	**LB**	TB
☐ 178	**Alex Singleton** (27)	**LB**	DEN
☐ 179	**Jayden Higgins** (52)	**WR**	HOU
☐ 180	**Chig Okonkwo** (15)	**TE**	WAS
☐ 181	**Jacory Croskey-Merritt** (44)	**RB**	WAS
☐ 182	**James Conner** (45)	**RB**	ARI
☐ 183	**Jordan Mason** (46)	**RB**	MIN
☐ 184	**Tyler Shough** (20)	**QB**	NO
☐ 185	**Patrick Mahomes** (21)	**QB**	NO
☐ 186	**Hunter Henry** (16)	**TE**	NE
☐ 187	**Nate Landman** (28)	**LB**	LAR
☐ 188	**Blake Cashman** (29)	**LB**	MIN
☐ 189	**Rashid Shaheed** (53)	**WR**	SEA
☐ 190	**Tre' Harris** (54)	**WR**	LAC
☐ 191	**Makai Lemon** (R) (55)	**WR**	PHI
☐ 192	**Carnell Tate** (R) (56)	**WR**	TEN

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
☐ 193	**Isiah Pacheco** (47)	**RB**	DET
☐ 194	**Barrett Carter** (30)	**LB**	CIN
☐ 195	**Tremaine Edmunds** (31)	**LB**	NYG
☐ 196	**Demario Davis** (32)	**LB**	NYJ
☐ 197	**Jordan Davis** (9)	**DL**	PHI
☐ 198	**Laiatu Latu** (10)	**DL**	IND
☐ 199	**Pat Freiermuth** (17)	**TE**	PIT
☐ 200	**Dalton Schultz** (18)	**TE**	HOU
☐ 201	**Brenton Strange** (19)	**TE**	JAC
☐ 202	**Isaiah Likely** (20)	**TE**	NYG
☐ 203	**Kamari Lassiter** (17)	**DB**	HOU
☐ 204	**Joshua Metellus** (18)	**DB**	MIN
☐ 205	**Jeremy Chinn** (19)	**DB**	LV
☐ 206	**Montez Sweat** (11)	**DL**	CHI
☐ 207	**Jalen Redmond** (12)	**DL**	MIN
☐ 208	**Micah Parsons** (13)	**DL**	GB
☐ 209	**Ricky Pearsall** (57)	**WR**	SF
☐ 210	**Jack Bech** (58)	**WR**	LV
☐ 211	**Antonio Williams** (R) (59)	**WR**	WAS
☐ 212	**Troy Franklin** (60)	**WR**	DEN
☐ 213	**KC Concepcion** (R) (61)	**WR**	CLE
☐ 214	**Jaquan Brisker** (20)	**DB**	PIT
☐ 215	**Ronnie Hickman** (21)	**DB**	CLE
☐ 216	**Riley Moss** (22)	**DB**	DEN
☐ 217	**Dax Hill** (23)	**DB**	CIN
☐ 218	**Cade Otton** (21)	**TE**	TB
☐ 219	**Dallas Goedert** (22)	**TE**	PHI
☐ 220	**Kenyon Sadiq** (R) (23)	**TE**	NYJ
☐ 221	**C.J. Stroud** (22)	**QB**	HOU
☐ 222	**Bryce Young** (23)	**QB**	CAR
☐ 223	**AJ Barner** (24)	**TE**	SEA
☐ 224	**Gunnar Helm** (25)	**TE**	TEN
☐ 225	**Germie Bernard** (R) (62)	**WR**	PIT
☐ 226	**Isaiah Davis** (48)	**RB**	NYJ
☐ 227	**Aaron Rodgers** (24)	**QB**	PIT
☐ 228	**Tyson Campbell** (24)	**DB**	CLE
☐ 229	**Tre'von Moehrig** (25)	**DB**	CAR
☐ 230	**Xavier Watts** (26)	**DB**	ATL
☐ 231	**David Njoku** (26)	**TE**	LAC
☐ 232	**Justice Hill** (49)	**RB**	BAL
☐ 233	**Zach Charbonnet** (50)	**RB**	SEA
☐ 234	**Tyler Allgeier** (51)	**RB**	ARI
☐ 235	**Ka'imi Fairbairn** (1)	**K**	HOU
☐ 236	**Jason Myers** (2)	**K**	SEA
☐ 237	**Alontae Taylor** (27)	**DB**	TEN
☐ 238	**Brandon Aubrey** (3)	**K**	DAL
☐ 239	**Cameron Dicker** (4)	**K**	LAC
☐ 240	**T.J. Hockenson** (27)	**TE**	MIN

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
34	**Nick Cross** (6)	DB	WAS
35	**Antoine Winfield Jr.** (7)	DB	TB
36	**Mike Sainristil** (8)	DB	WAS
37	**Chamarri Conner** (9)	DB	KC
38	**Xavier McKinney** (10)	DB	GB
39	**Derwin James Jr.** (11)	DB	LAC
40	**Jeffery Simmons** (7)	DL	TEN
41	**Patrick Queen** (23)	LB	PIT
42	**Ernest Jones IV** (24)	LB	SEA

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
43	**Quay Walker** (25)	LB	LV
44	**Tykee Smith** (12)	DB	TB
45	**Talanoa Hufanga** (13)	DB	DEN
46	**Devon Witherspoon** (14)	DB	SEA
47	**Kam Curl** (15)	DB	LAR
48	**Jordan Battle** (16)	DB	CIN
49	**Derrick Brown** (8)	DL	CAR
50	**Alex Anzalone** (26)	LB	TB
51	**Alex Singleton** (27)	LB	DEN

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
52	**Nate Landman** (28)	LB	LAR
53	**Blake Cashman** (29)	LB	MIN
54	**Barrett Carter** (30)	LB	CIN
55	**Tremaine Edmunds** (31)	LB	NYG
56	**DeMario Davis** (32)	LB	NYJ
57	**Jordan Davis** (9)	DL	PHI
58	**Laiatu Latu** (10)	DL	IND
59	**Kamari Lassiter** (17)	DB	HOU
60	**Joshua Metellus** (18)	DB	MIN

Rk	Player (Pos Rank)	Pos	Team
61	**Jeremy Chinn** (19)	DB	LV
62	**Montez Sweat** (11)	DL	CHI
63	**Jalen Redmond** (12)	DL	MIN
64	**Devin Lloyd** (33)	LB	CAR
65	**Nakobe Dean** (34)	LB	LV

QB RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team
☐ 1	**Josh Allen**	BUF
☐ 2	**Dak Prescott**	DAL
☐ 3	**Joe Burrow**	CIN
☐ 4	**Caleb Williams**	CHI
☐ 5	**Lamar Jackson**	BAL
☐ 6	**Bo Nix**	DEN
☐ 7	**Drake Maye**	NE
☐ 8	**Trevor Lawrence**	JAC
☐ 9	**Jalen Hurts**	PHI
☐ 10	**Justin Herbert**	LAC
☐ 11	**Jared Goff**	DET
☐ 12	**Jayden Daniels**	WAS
☐ 13	**Matthew Stafford**	LAR
☐ 14	**Baker Mayfield**	TB
☐ 15	**Jordan Love**	GB
☐ 16	**Kyler Murray**	MIN
☐ 17	**Jaxson Dart**	NYG
☐ 18	**Sam Darnold**	SEA
☐ 19	**Brock Purdy**	SF
☐ 20	**Tyler Shough**	NO
☐ 21	**Patrick Mahomes**	KC
☐ 22	**C.J. Stroud**	HOU
☐ 23	**Bryce Young**	CAR
☐ 24	**Aaron Rodgers**	PIT
☐ 25	**Daniel Jones**	IND
☐ 26	**Cam Ward**	TEN
☐ 27	**Jacoby Brissett**	ARI
☐ 28	**Malik Willis**	MIA
☐ 29	**Geno Smith**	NYJ
☐ 30	**Shedeur Sanders**	CLE
☐ 31	**Tua Tagovailoa**	ATL
☐ 32	**Kirk Cousins**	LV
☐ 33	**Fernando Mendoza** (R)	LV
☐ 34	**Justin Fields**	KC
☐ 35	**Deshaun Watson**	CLE
☐ 36	**Michael Penix Jr.**	ATL
☐ 37	**Mac Jones**	SF
☐ 38	**Quinn Ewers**	MIA
☐ 39	**Jameis Winston**	NYG
☐ 40	**Riley Leonard**	IND
☐ 41	**Carson Beck** (R)	ARI
☐ 42	**Cade Klubnik** (R)	NYJ
☐ 43	**Drew Allar** (R)	PIT
☐ 44	**J.J. McCarthy**	MIN
☐ 45	**Tyler Huntley**	BAL
☐ 46	**Mitchell Trubisky**	TEN
☐ 47	**Jarrett Stidham**	DEN
☐ 48	**Will Howard**	PIT
☐ 49	**Taylen Green** (R)	CLE
☐ 50	**Ty Simpson** (R)	LAR

INJURY CONCERNS

JAYDEN DANIELS | WASHINGTON

Daniels' 2025 season was derailed by multiple injuries, but the most important one was a dislocated left elbow suffered in early November. Washington later shut him down for the rest of the season, although reporting at the time indicated there was no ligament damage and no surgery was necessary. Daniels' thin frame makes it impossible to ignore the likelihood of future durability issues.

DANIEL JONES | INDIANAPOLIS

Jones is iffy for the season opener as he recovers from a Week 14 Achilles rupture. The injury typically takes around nine months to physically heal, but stiffness and limited explosiveness can linger well over a year. Much of Jones' fantasy upside comes from his ground game, and he should be treated as a shaky QB2 target as a result.

PATRICK MAHOMES | KANSAS CITY

Mahomes suffered torn anterior cruciate and lateral collateral ligaments in Week 15. As of early May, he was reportedly well ahead of schedule, but mobility to keep plays alive is what makes Mahomes special, so cautious optimism ought to override any hype.

KYLER MURRAY | MINNESOTA

Murray's 2025 season was cut down to five appearances after a midfoot sprain. He is fully expected to be ready for training camp and should take over as the QB1 after the failed J.J. McCarthy experiment.

BO NIX | DENVER

Nix is considered ahead of schedule after right ankle surgery to fix a fracture suffered in the playoffs. Even though he may run slightly less often in 2026, he's fully on pace for training camp and should be in the mix for another mid-range QB1 finish with an upgraded receiving corps.

MICHAEL PENIX JR. | ATLANTA

A partial left ACL tear suffered in Week 11 has Penix behind the curve in an offseason battle against newcomer Tua Tagovailoa. Smart money suggests Penix will be the backup as long as Tua plays well and stays healthy.

CAM WARD | TENNESSEE

Ward entered the offseason on the mend following a Grade 3 sprain of the AC joint in his throwing shoulder. He has been working through his rehab with a managed throwing program and is fully on schedule for training camp.

DESHAUN WATSON | CLEVELAND

Watson's last major injury was the ruptured right Achilles that he suffered on Oct. 20, 2024. He underwent surgery and then suffered a setback during recovery that led to a second Achilles surgery in January 2025, costing him all of last season. That came after his 2023 season ended because of surgery for a displaced fracture in his throwing shoulder.

INTENDED AIR YARDS PER ATTEMPT (IAY/PA)

Rk	Player	Team	DB	ADOT
1	**Drake Maye**	NE	492	9.1
2	**Jalen Hurts**	PHI	454	9.0
3	**Matthew Stafford**	LAR	597	9.0
4	**J.J. McCarthy**	MIN	243	8.9
5	**Lamar Jackson**	BAL	302	8.8
6	**Jordan Love**	GB	439	8.7
7	**Trevor Lawrence**	JAC	560	8.7
8	**Caleb Williams**	CHI	568	8.5
9	**Michael Penix Jr.**	ATL	276	8.4
10	**Tyler Shough**	NO	327	8.3
11	**Jaxson Dart**	NYG	339	8.1
12	**Baker Mayfield**	TB	543	8.0
13	**Daniel Jones**	IND	384	8.0
14	**Dak Prescott**	DAL	600	8.0
15	**C.J. Stroud**	HOU	423	7.9
16	**Patrick Mahomes**	KC	502	7.9
17	**Spencer Rattler**	NO	257	7.9
18	**Sam Darnold**	SEA	477	7.8
19	**Justin Herbert**	LAC	512	7.8
20	**Jacoby Brissett**	ARI	485	7.6
21	**Brock Purdy**	SF	284	7.5
22	**Bo Nix**	DEN	612	7.3
23	**Mac Jones**	SF	289	7.3
24	**Joe Flacco**	2TM	416	7.3
25	**Josh Allen**	BUF	460	7.3
26	**Cam Ward**	TEN	540	7.2
27	**Joe Burrow**	CIN	259	7.2
28	**Kirk Cousins**	ATL	269	7.0
29	**Tua Tagovailoa**	MIA	384	6.7
30	**Bryce Young**	CAR	478	6.4
31	**Jared Goff**	DET	578	6.4
32	**Geno Smith**	LV	448	6.1
33	**Aaron Rodgers**	PIT	498	6.0

Source: Pro Football Reference 2025 Advanced Passing page

Parade

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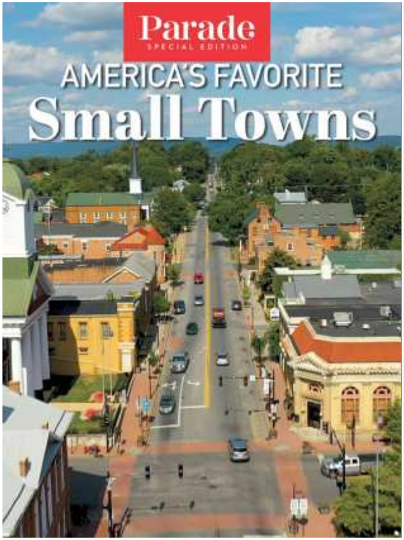

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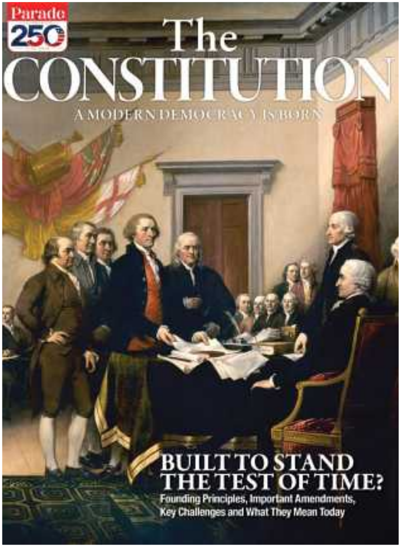

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RB RANKINGS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Bijan Robinson	ATL
☐	2	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET
☐	3	Christian McCaffrey	SF
☐	4	Jonathan Taylor	IND
☐	5	Ashton Jeanty	LV
☐	6	James Cook III	BUF
☐	7	De'Von Achane	MIA
☐	8	Breece Hall	NYJ
☐	9	Javonte Williams	DAL
☐	10	Saquon Barkley	PHI
☐	11	Josh Jacobs	GB
☐	12	Kyren Williams	LAR
☐	13	Kenneth Walker III	KC
☐	14	Omarion Hampton	LAC
☐	15	Derrick Henry	BAL
☐	16	Chase Brown	CIN
☐	17	RJ Harvey	DEN
☐	18	TreVeyon Henderson	NE
☐	19	D'Andre Swift	CHI
☐	20	Quinshon Judkins	CLE
☐	21	Travis Etienne Jr.	NO
☐	22	Bucky Irving	TB
☐	23	Chuba Hubbard	CAR
☐	24	Cam Skattebo	NYG
☐	25	Jeremiyah Love (R)	ARI
☐	26	Rico Dowdle	PIT
☐	27	David Montgomery	HOU
☐	28	Tony Pollard	TEN
☐	29	Kyle Monangai	CHI
☐	30	Alvin Kamara	NO
☐	31	Jaylen Warren	PIT
☐	32	Jadarian Price (R)	SEA
☐	33	Rachaad White	WAS
☐	34	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE
☐	35	Woody Marks	HOU
☐	36	Aaron Jones Sr.	MIN
☐	37	Tyjae Spears	TEN
☐	38	Bhayshul Tuten	JAC
☐	39	Dylan Sampson	CLE
☐	40	Kenneth Gainwell	TB
☐	41	J.K. Dobbins	DEN
☐	42	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	NYG
☐	43	Blake Corum	LAR
☐	44	Jacory Croskey-Merritt	WAS
☐	45	James Conner	ARI
☐	46	Jordan Mason	MIN
☐	47	Isiah Pacheco	DET
☐	48	Isaiah Davis	NYJ
☐	49	Justice Hill	BAL
☐	50	Zach Charbonnet	SEA
☐	51	Tyler Allgeier	ARI
☐	52	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	JAC
☐	53	Devin Singletary	NYG
☐	54	Chris Brooks	GB
☐	55	LeQuint Allen Jr.	JAC
☐	56	Kimani Vidal	LAC
☐	57	Ty Johnson	BUF
☐	58	Emanuel Wilson	SEA
☐	59	Jaylen Wright	MIA
☐	60	Samaje Perine	CIN
☐	61	Jaydon Blue	DAL
☐	62	Demond Claiborne (R)	MIN
☐	63	Kaelon Black (R)	SF
☐	64	Brian Robinson Jr.	ATL
☐	65	Adam Randall (R)	BAL
☐	66	Ray Davis	BUF
☐	67	Kaytron Allen (R)	WAS
☐	68	Jonathon Brooks	CAR
☐	69	Brashard Smith	KC
☐	70	Sean Tucker	TB

WORKLOAD WATCH

Touch/Game: **3 Years**		TCH	TPG	GP
1	Bijan Robinson	1,003	19.7	51
2	Saquon Barkley	983	21.4	46
3	Derrick Henry	974	19.1	51
4	Kyren Williams	905	20.1	45
5	Tony Pollard	883	17.7	50
6	Jonathan Taylor	878	21.4	41
7	Josh Jacobs	877	19.5	45
8	James Cook III	862	17.2	50
9	Jahmyr Gibbs	856	17.5	49
10	Breece Hall	844	17.2	49
11	D'Andre Swift	820	16.7	49
12	Christian McCaffrey	817	22.1	37
13	Travis Etienne Jr.	810	16.5	49
14	Javonte Williams	742	15.1	49
15	Chuba Hubbard	734	15.6	47

Touch/Game: **2 Years**		TCH	TPG	GP
1	Bijan Robinson	731	21.5	34
2	Saquon Barkley	695	21.7	32
3	Jonathan Taylor	690	22.3	31
4	Derrick Henry	666	19.6	34
5	Kyren Williams	645	19.6	33
6	Jahmyr Gibbs	622	18.3	34
7	Josh Jacobs	607	19.0	32
8	De'Von Achane	586	17.8	33
9	Chase Brown	584	17.7	33
10	James Cook III	581	17.6	33
11	Tony Pollard	576	17.5	33
12	D'Andre Swift	552	16.7	33
13	Rico Dowdle	549	16.6	33
14	Breece Hall	545	17.0	32
15	Travis Etienne Jr.	485	15.2	32

INJURY CONCERNS

JONATHON BROOKS | CAROLINA

Brooks re-tore his right ACL in December 2024, and Carolina's May 2025 PUP placement confirmed he would miss that entire season. The long layoff gives him a path toward returning in 2026, but repeated ACL damage to the same knee makes him a total unknown for fantasy. Will he have the same burst? Is he at greater risk of yet another tear? Drafting Brooks is risky business, folks.

ZACH CHARBONNET | SEATTLE

Head coach Mike Macdonald said Charbonnet was "not going to miss the whole year" after a torn ACL on Jan. 17. The reconstruction typically takes nine months, which lines up with a likely October/November return. Seattle moved on from Kenneth Walker III after his brilliant Super Bowl display and spent the No. 32 overall draft pick on Jadarian Price after signing Emanuel Wilson in free agency. Charbonnet is merely a late-round fantasy flier at this point.

ZACH CHARBONNET

JAMES CONNER | ARIZONA

Arizona confirmed that Conner underwent foot surgery last September, though the specific nature of the injury wasn't disclosed. Conner participated in the team's early-April offseason program, so he should be good for Week 1. However, in his age-31 season, Conner now has competition from No. 3 overall pick Jeremiyah Love and free-agent addition Tyler Allgeier.

NAJEE HARRIS | FREE AGENT

Harris' early-season Achilles tear at least gives him a chance to play early in 2026, but backs coming off Achilles repairs usually experience limited burst for a year or so, and he already wasn't explosive. Harris remained a free agent as of early May.

QUINSHON JUDKINS | CLEVELAND

The Browns hope to get Judkins on the field with an increased workload during training camp. He suffered a dislocated right ankle and fractured fibula in late December, so the team will take it easy on him until the real deal rolls around. He should be ready to roll come Week 1.

CAM SKATTEBO | N.Y. GIANTS

The full severity of last season's gruesome injury includes a deltoid ligament tear, an ankle dislocation and a compound fracture. Skattebo was present for voluntary workouts in April, and the current expectation is that he has a chance for Week 1. Although the bruiser probably won't be at full strength right away, the Giants felt comfortable not adding another back to their stable in the offseason.

NEVILLE E. GUARD-IMAGN IMAGES

WR RANKINGS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	**Ja'Marr Chase**	CIN
☐	2	**Jaxon Smith-Njigba**	SEA
☐	3	**Puka Nacua**	LAR
☐	4	**Amon-Ra St. Brown**	DET
☐	5	**Justin Jefferson**	MIN
☐	6	**CeeDee Lamb**	DAL
☐	7	**Emeka Egbuka**	TB
☐	8	**Tetairoa McMillan**	CAR
☐	9	**George Pickens**	DAL
☐	10	**Drake London**	ATL
☐	11	**Chris Olave**	NO
☐	12	**Nico Collins**	HOU
☐	13	**Zay Flowers**	BAL
☐	14	**Terry McLaurin**	WAS
☐	15	**A.J. Brown**	NE
☐	16	**DeVonta Smith**	PHI
☐	17	**Courtland Sutton**	DEN
☐	18	**Malik Nabers**	NYG
☐	19	**Luther Burden III**	CHI
☐	20	**Brian Thomas Jr.**	JAC
☐	21	**Ladd McConkey**	LAC
☐	22	**Garrett Wilson**	NYJ
☐	23	**Jameson Williams**	DET
☐	24	**Tee Higgins**	CIN
☐	25	**Davante Adams**	LAR
☐	26	**DK Metcalf**	PIT
☐	27	**DJ Moore**	BUF
☐	28	**Rome Odunze**	CHI
☐	29	**Mike Evans**	SF
☐	30	**Rashee Rice**	KC
☐	31	**Jaylen Waddle**	DEN
☐	32	**Michael Pittman Jr.**	PIT
☐	33	**Marvin Harrison Jr.**	ARI
☐	34	**Alec Pierce**	IND
☐	35	**Jayden Reed**	GB

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	36	**Michael Wilson**	ARI
☐	37	**Chris Godwin**	TB
☐	38	**Jakobi Meyers**	JAC
☐	39	**Jerry Jeudy**	CLE
☐	40	**Josh Downs**	IND
☐	41	**Christian Watson**	GB
☐	42	**Parker Washington**	JAC
☐	43	**Jordan Addison**	MIN
☐	44	**Xavier Worthy**	KC
☐	45	**Quentin Johnston**	LAC
☐	46	**Romeo Doubs**	NE
☐	47	**Wan'Dale Robinson**	TEN
☐	48	**Jordyn Tyson** (R)	NO
☐	49	**Khalil Shakir**	BUF
☐	50	**Tre Tucker**	LV
☐	51	**Matthew Golden**	GB
☐	52	**Jayden Higgins**	HOU
☐	53	**Rashid Shaheed**	SEA
☐	54	**Tre' Harris**	LAC
☐	55	**Makai Lemon** (R)	PHI
☐	56	**Carnell Tate** (R)	TEN
☐	57	**Ricky Pearsall**	SF
☐	58	**Jack Bech**	LV
☐	59	**Antonio Williams** (R)	WAS
☐	60	**Troy Franklin**	DEN
☐	61	**KC Concepcion** (R)	CLE
☐	62	**Germie Bernard** (R)	PIT
☐	63	**Rashod Bateman**	BAL
☐	64	**Jauan Jennings**	MIN
☐	65	**Cooper Kupp**	SEA
☐	66	**Andrei Iosivas**	CIN
☐	67	**Xavier Legette**	CAR
☐	68	**Jalen Coker**	CAR
☐	69	**Ryan Flournoy**	DAL
☐	70	**Jalen McMillan**	TB

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

Highest WR aDOT		Team	TGT	aDOT
1	**Alec Pierce**	IND	84	18.9
2	**Christian Watson**	GB	55	17.8
3	**Kayshon Boutte**	NE	46	17.0
4	**Isaiah Bond**	CLE	44	17.0
5	**Adonai Mitchell**	2TM	74	14.9
6	**Brian Thomas Jr.**	JAC	91	14.5
7	**Ricky Pearsall**	SF	53	14.1
8	**Rome Odunze**	CHI	90	13.9
9	**Darnell Mooney**	ATL	72	13.9
10	**Terry McLaurin**	WAS	60	13.9
11	**Jordan Addison**	MIN	79	13.7
12	**Mike Evans**	TB	62	13.3
13	**Jaylen Waddle**	MIA	100	13.1
14	**Tee Higgins**	CIN	98	13.1
15	**Mack Hollins**	NE	65	13.0

Lowest WR aDOT		Team	TGT	aDOT
1	**Khalil Shakir**	BUF	95	3.7
2	**Rashee Rice**	KC	78	4.3
3	**Malik Washington**	MIA	65	4.9
4	**Deebo Samuel Sr.**	WAS	99	5.2
5	**John Metchie III**	2TM	48	5.6
6	**JuJu Smith-Schuster**	KC	45	5.6
7	**Olamide Zaccheaus**	CHI	65	6.7
8	**Christian Kirk**	HOU	52	6.8
9	**Chris Godwin**	TB	51	7.0
10	**Josh Downs**	IND	88	7.2
11	**Cooper Kupp**	SEA	70	7.4
12	**Tyler Lockett**	2TM	55	7.6
13	**Luther Burden III**	CHI	60	7.7
14	**Tre' Harris**	LAC	43	7.7
15	**Travis Hunter**	JAC	43	7.8

INJURY CONCERNS

TANK DELL | HOUSTON

Dell suffered the most severe injury of any receiver in this group when he dislocated his knee and tore multiple ligaments on Dec. 21, 2024, including the ACL, with meniscus damage during Houston's loss to Kansas City. The injury required multiple surgeries and cost him the entire 2025 season. Houston has taken a deliberately cautious approach. Dell has publicly said he feels "back," but the Texans have avoided putting a firm timetable on him and are still treating the rehab as a long-range process. He should be expected to return at some point in 2026, but until Houston gives a clearer summer update, it's anyone's guess when we'll see him again.

TYREEK HILL | FREE AGENT

This was one of the nastiest fantasy injuries in recent memory. Hill's dislocated knee and multi-ligament reconstruction legitimately could spell the end of his career. At a minimum, it's unwise to expect him to return to form at 32, provided a team is willing to assume the risk and off-field frustrations that are baked into signing the Cheetah.

TRAVIS HUNTER | JACKSONVILLE

Hunter is currently expected to be a limited offseason participant with the goal of being full speed for training camp and beyond. The Jaguars have moved him to a full-time cornerback role, though it'll be surprising if he is not sprinkled in on occasion as a receiver. Either way, Hunter isn't a viable fantasy draft target.

MALIK NABERS | N.Y. GIANTS

The Giants placed Nabers on the Reserve/Injured list on Sept. 29, following a torn ACL with cartilage damage. He is on track for training camp and was present for the start of voluntary workouts. Count on Nabers facing some degree of snap management during the summer that will carry into the early stages of the regular season.

ALEC PIERCE | INDIANAPOLIS

Pierce underwent cleanup ankle surgery in April after playing through pain during the 2025 season. The Colts have said the recovery is about three months, which should put him back on the field for training camp. As of now, this looks more like a short-term offseason issue than a problem that should linger into the season.

CALVIN RIDLEY | TENNESSEE

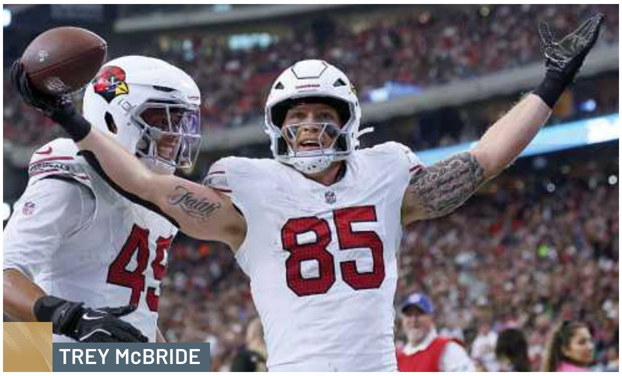
In last season's Week 11 meeting with Houston, Ridley suffered a fractured fibula and high-ankle sprain. He is on schedule for the opener as he nears his 32nd birthday (Dec. 20), and Tennessee restructured the veteran's contract to keep him around.

GARRETT WILSON | N.Y. JETS

Wilson hyperextended his knee last October, returned, then aggravated the same knee and wound up on injured reserve in November. He looks on track for camp and Week 1 unless something changes.

TE RANKINGS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Trey McBride	ARI
☐	2	Brock Bowers	LV
☐	3	Tyler Warren	IND
☐	4	Colston Loveland	CHI
☐	5	Harold Fannin Jr.	CLE
☐	6	Kyle Pitts Sr.	ATL
☐	7	Travis Kelce	KC
☐	8	Sam LaPorta	DET
☐	9	Jake Ferguson	DAL
☐	10	Mark Andrews	BAL
☐	11	Juwan Johnson	NO
☐	12	George Kittle	SF
☐	13	Dalton Kincaid	BUF
☐	14	Tucker Kraft	GB
☐	15	Chig Okonkwo	WAS
☐	16	Hunter Henry	NE
☐	17	Pat Freiermuth	PIT
☐	18	Dalton Schultz	HOU
☐	19	Brenton Strange	JAC
☐	20	Isaiah Likely	NYG
☐	21	Cade Otton	TB
☐	22	Dallas Goedert	PHI
☐	23	Kenyon Sadiq (R)	NYJ
☐	24	AJ Barner	SEA
☐	25	Gunnar Helm	TEN
☐	26	David Njoku	LAC
☐	27	T.J. Hockenson	MIN
☐	28	Ja'Tavion Sanders	CAR
☐	29	Colby Parkinson	LAR
☐	30	Jake Tonges	SF
☐	31	Mike Gesicki	CIN
☐	32	Oronde Gadsden	LAC
☐	33	Evan Engram	DEN
☐	34	Cole Kmet	CHI
☐	35	Dawson Knox	BUF
☐	36	Theo Johnson	NYG
☐	37	Matt Hibner (R)	BAL
☐	38	Greg Dulcich	MIA
☐	39	Luke Musgrave	GB
☐	40	Tyler Higbee	LAR


TREY McBRIDE

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

Highest TE aDOT		Team	TGT	aDOT
1	Darren Waller	MIA	34	10.6
2	Mike Gesicki	CIN	42	10.0
3	Dalton Kincaid	BUF	49	9.5
4	Colston Loveland	CHI	82	9.0
5	Zach Ertz	WAS	72	9.0
6	Oronde Gadsden	LAC	69	9.0
7	Cole Kmet	CHI	48	8.8
8	Luke Musgrave	GB	31	8.6
9	Theo Johnson	NYG	74	8.3
10	Hunter Henry	NE	87	8.0
11	Isaiah Likely	BAL	36	8.0
12	Juwan Johnson	NO	102	7.5
13	Kyle Pitts Sr.	ATL	118	7.4
14	Mark Andrews	BAL	70	7.4
15	Dallas Goedert	PHI	82	7.1
16	Brenton Strange	JAC	60	6.9
17	Trey McBride	ARI	169	6.8
18	Travis Kelce	KC	108	6.8
19	George Kittle	SF	69	6.7
20	Dawson Knox	BUF	49	6.7
21	Brock Bowers	LV	86	6.5
22	Dalton Schultz	HOU	106	6.2
23	Noah Gray	KC	37	6.1
24	Harold Fannin Jr.	CLE	107	6.0
25	Pat Freiermuth	PIT	54	6.0
26	Mason Taylor	NYJ	65	5.9
27	Tyler Higbee	LAR	36	5.9
28	Sam LaPorta	DET	49	5.7
29	Gunnar Helm	TEN	55	5.6
30	Tyler Warren	IND	112	5.4

BROCK BOWERS

INJURY CONCERNS

BROCK BOWERS | LAS VEGAS

Bowers played through a PCL injury and bone bruise in his left knee that dated back to Week 1, and the Raiders finally shut him down in late December to get him healthy for 2026. As long as there is no setback, expect him to be ready for the start of the season and back to functioning as a top-tier fantasy tight end.

GEORGE KITTLE | SAN FRANCISCO

General manager John Lynch has said he is hopeful that Kittle (Achilles) will be back on the field as of Week 1. A more cautious approach is to anticipate that he'll open the year on the Reserve/PUP and miss the first month of play. Between the late-season timing of the injury and Kittle turning 33 in October, consider a fringe TE1 finish to be borderline miraculous.

TUCKER KRAFT | GREEN BAY

Kraft was lost for the season in early November due to an ACL tear. There's enough time to expect that he'll be on the field for Week 1, barring a setback, but his fantasy offerings might be weaker than we're accustomed to seeing. Fortunately, he has a nose for the end zone, and his savvy play can create separation even if physical limitations persist when he returns to the field.

SAM LaPORTA | DETROIT

Detroit placed LaPorta on IR in November after the herniated disc in his back worsened. He is aiming to be fully cleared by training camp. The present read is that LaPorta will be ready for Week 1, but back injuries can be tricky. Expect head coach Dan Campbell to take it easy on LaPorta this summer.

DAVID NJOKU | L.A. CHARGERS

Njoku missed the final month of the regular season after suffering a minor knee sprain. He's healthy and should be another valuable weapon for Justin Herbert.

FROM LEFT: TROY TAORMINA-IMAGN IMAGES; BOB DECHIARA-IMAGN IMAGES

DST RANKINGS

Rk	Team
☐ 1	Rams
☐ 2	Broncos
☐ 3	Bills
☐ 4	Texans
☐ 5	Vikings
☐ 6	Bears
☐ 7	Seahawks
☐ 8	Steelers
☐ 9	Ravens
☐ 10	Chargers
☐ 11	Raiders
☐ 12	Browns
☐ 13	Lions
☐ 14	Eagles
☐ 15	Packers
☐ 16	Panthers
☐ 17	Patriots
☐ 18	Jaguars
☐ 19	Titans
☐ 20	Commanders
☐ 21	Saints
☐ 22	Cowboys
☐ 23	Giants
☐ 24	Falcons
☐ 25	Buccaneers
☐ 26	Colts
☐ 27	Bengals
☐ 28	49ers
☐ 29	Chiefs
☐ 30	Jets
☐ 31	Cardinals
☐ 32	Dolphins

GOING UP

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

Star defensive end Maxx Crosby returns following a failed physical that nullified a trade. Free-agent additions in pass-rusher Kwity Paye, linebackers Nakobe Dean and Quay Walker and cornerback Taron Johnson put more talent around him and give new defensive coordinator Rob Leonard building blocks for this 3-4 realignment. Vegas also invested second- and third-round picks in safety Treydan Stukes and edge Keyron Crawford. All told, few teams have overhauled a unit as heavily as the Raiders.

LOS ANGELES RAMS

The Rams already offered top-10 fantasy value in 2025, finishing with 47 sacks (tied for seventh) and 26 takeaways (fifth). Cobie Durant's departure matters less after L.A. traded for former Kansas City Chiefs cornerback Trent McDuffie and signed his teammate Jaylen Watson in free agency in what amounts to a noteworthy upgrade at the position, while Kam Curl returns to man the starting strong safety role. Chris Shula returns as defensive coordinator, and the Rams are positioned for a leap into the elite fantasy tier.

DALLAS COWBOYS

Only two defenses produced fewer takeaways than the Cowboys a year ago, and this was among the worst groups regardless of fantasy scoring wrinkles. In the offseason, Dallas brought in veteran help with edge Rashan Gary, safety Jalen Thompson and cornerback Cobie Durant. The franchise also drafted safety Caleb Downs and edge Malachi Lawrence in Round 1, later adding a trio of depth picks spread across all three defensive layers. New defensive coordinator Christian Parker has a formidable foundation to mold after a dreadful 2025 effort.

GOING DOWN

GREEN BAY PACKERS

There is considerable uncertainty in Green Bay, starting at the top. Jonathan Gannon replaces Jeff Hafley as defensive coordinator, restoring the 3-4 base alignment. Micah Parsons' December ACL tear clouds his 2026 expectations, and Rashan Gary, Colby Wooden, Quay Walker and Nate Hobbs all moved out of Titletown. The Packers turned to defensive lineman Javon Hargrave, 33, and linebacker Zaire Franklin, 30, as veteran help in free agency. Sizable personnel and scheme changes make one of 2025's worst fantasy units once again a tough sell in fantasy leagues.

JARED VERSE

DALE ZANINE-IMAGN IMAGES

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Edge Jaelan Phillips, linebacker Nakobe Dean and safety Reed Blankenship are gone and won't be easy to replace. The arrival of inconsistent corner Riq Woolen is a net positive, and Philly traded for pass-rushing linebacker Jonathan Greenard during the NFL Draft. However, Greenard is coming off only three sacks in 12 games after 24.5 in his previous 32 outings. Philadelphia retained Vic Fangio to call plays, but the defense lost several useful pieces from its second and third levels, so this could take time to develop.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

The 2025 Colts managed a modest 39 sacks and then lost 12 of them in free agency with the departures of Kwity Paye, Samson Ebukam, Nick Cross and Neville Gallimore. While Arden Key and Micheal Clemons were brought in to help, neither is a premier pass-rusher. Furthermore, trading Indy's leading tackler, Zaire Franklin, softens the middle of coordinator Lou Anarumo's already suspect defense. Second-round pick CJ Allen should replace Franklin, though a rookie learning curve is a fair expectation.

2026
NFL SCHEDULE

WEEK 1
Wednesday, September 9
New England at Seattle

Thursday, September 10
San Francisco vs. L.A. Rams (Melbourne)

Sunday, September 13
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati
New Orleans at Detroit
N.Y. Jets at Tennessee
Baltimore at Indianapolis
Atlanta at Pittsburgh
Chicago at Carolina
Cleveland at Jacksonville
Buffalo at Houston
Miami at Las Vegas
Green Bay at Minnesota
Washington at Philadelphia
Arizona at L.A. Chargers
Dallas at N.Y. Giants

Monday, September 14
Denver at Kansas City

WEEK 2
Thursday, September 17
Detroit at Buffalo

Sunday, September 20
Carolina at Atlanta
Minnesota at Chicago
Philadelphia at Tennessee
Pittsburgh at New England
Green Bay at N.Y. Jets
Cleveland at Tampa Bay
New Orleans at Baltimore
Cincinnati at Houston
Jacksonville at Denver
Las Vegas at L.A. Chargers
Washington at Dallas
Seattle at Arizona
Miami at San Francisco
Indianapolis at Kansas City

Monday, September 21
N.Y. Giants at L.A. Rams

WEEK 3
Thursday, September 24
Atlanta at Green Bay

Sunday, September 27
L.A. Chargers at Buffalo
Carolina at Cleveland
N.Y. Jets at Detroit
Houston at Indianapolis
Kansas City at Miami
Tennessee at N.Y. Giants
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Seattle at Washington
New England at Jacksonville
Arizona at San Francisco
Minnesota at Tampa Bay
Baltimore vs. Dallas (Rio de Janeiro)
Las Vegas at New Orleans
L.A. Rams at Denver

Monday, September 28
Philadelphia at Chicago

WEEK 4
Thursday, October 1
Pittsburgh at Cleveland

Sunday, October 4
Indianapolis vs. Washington (London)
New England at Buffalo
N.Y. Jets at Chicago
Jacksonville at Cincinnati
Arizona at N.Y. Giants
L.A. Rams at Philadelphia
Green Bay at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at Baltimore
Dallas at Houston
Miami at Minnesota
Kansas City at Las Vegas
Denver at San Francisco
L.A. Chargers at Seattle
Detroit at Carolina

Monday, October 5
Atlanta at New Orleans

WEEK 5
Thursday, October 8
Tampa Bay at Dallas

Sunday, October 11
Philadelphia vs. Jacksonville (London)
Houston at Tennessee
Cincinnati at Miami
Las Vegas at New England
Minnesota at New Orleans
Cleveland at N.Y. Jets
Indianapolis at Pittsburgh
N.Y. Giants at Washington
Denver at L.A. Chargers
Chicago at Green Bay
Detroit at Arizona
San Francisco at Seattle
Baltimore at Atlanta

Monday, October 12
Buffalo at L.A. Rams

Bye: Kansas City, Carolina

WEEK 6
Thursday, October 15
Seattle at Denver

Sunday, October 18
Houston vs. Jacksonville (London)
Chicago at Atlanta
Baltimore at Cleveland
Tennessee at Indianapolis
N.Y. Jets at New England
New Orleans at N.Y. Giants
Carolina at Philadelphia
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay
Arizona at L.A. Rams
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City
Buffalo at Las Vegas
Dallas at Green Bay

Monday, October 19
Washington at San Francisco

Bye: Cincinnati, Detroit, Miami, Minnesota

WEEK 7
Thursday, October 22
New England at Chicago

Sunday, October 25
Pittsburgh vs. New Orleans (Paris)
San Francisco at Atlanta
Cleveland at Tennessee
Indianapolis at Minnesota
Miami at N.Y. Jets
Tampa Bay at Carolina
Cincinnati at Baltimore
N.Y. Giants at Houston
Denver at Arizona
Green Bay at Detroit
L.A. Rams at Las Vegas
Kansas City at Seattle

Monday, October 26
Dallas at Philadelphia

Bye: Buffalo, L.A. Chargers, Washington, Jacksonville

WEEK 8
Thursday, October 29
Carolina at Green Bay

Sunday, November 1
Baltimore at Buffalo
Tennessee at Cincinnati
Arizona at Dallas
Minnesota at Detroit
Las Vegas at N.Y. Jets
Cleveland at Pittsburgh
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Indianapolis at Jacksonville
L.A. Chargers at L.A. Rams
Kansas City at Denver
New England at Miami
Philadelphia at Washington

Monday, November 2
Chicago at Seattle

Bye: New Orleans, N.Y. Giants, San Francisco, Houston

WEEK 9

Thursday, November 5
Jacksonville at Baltimore

Sunday, November 8
Cincinnati vs. Atlanta (Madrid)
Dallas at Indianapolis
N.Y. Jets at Kansas City
Detroit at Miami
Cleveland at New Orleans
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia
L.A. Rams at Washington
Denver at Carolina
Houston at L.A. Chargers
Las Vegas at San Francisco
Green Bay at New England
Arizona at Seattle
Tampa Bay at Chicago

Monday, November 9
Buffalo at Minnesota

Bye: Tennessee, Pittsburgh

WEEK 10

Thursday, November 12
Washington at N.Y. Giants

Sunday, November 15
New England vs. Detroit (Munich)
Kansas City at Atlanta
Houston at Cleveland
Minnesota at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Tennessee
Miami at Indianapolis
Carolina at New Orleans
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets
Seattle at Las Vegas
L.A. Rams at Arizona
San Francisco at Dallas
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati

Monday, November 16
L.A. Chargers at Baltimore

Bye: Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, Tampa Bay

WEEK 11

Thursday, November 19
Indianapolis at Houston

Sunday, November 22
Miami at Buffalo
New Orleans at Chicago
Tennessee at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Detroit
Arizona at Kansas City
Jacksonville at N.Y. Giants
Baltimore at Carolina
N.Y. Jets at L.A. Chargers
Las Vegas at Denver
Pittsburgh at Philadelphia
Minnesota vs. San Francisco (Mexico City)

Monday, November 23
Cincinnati at Washington

Bye: Atlanta, Cleveland, Green Bay, L.A. Rams, New England, Seattle

WEEK 12

Wednesday, November 25
Green Bay at L.A. Rams

Thursday, November 26
Chicago at Detroit
Philadelphia at Dallas
Kansas City at Buffalo

Friday, November 27
Denver at Pittsburgh

Sunday, November 29
New Orleans at Cincinnati
Las Vegas at Cleveland
N.Y. Giants at Indianapolis
N.Y. Jets at Miami
Atlanta at Minnesota
Baltimore at Houston
Tennessee at Jacksonville
Washington at Arizona
Seattle at San Francisco
New England at L.A. Chargers

Monday, November 30
Carolina at Tampa Bay

WEEK 13

Thursday, December 3
Kansas City at L.A. Rams

Sunday, December 6
Detroit at Atlanta
Jacksonville at Chicago
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Washington at Tennessee
Green Bay at New Orleans
San Francisco at N.Y. Giants
L.A. Chargers at Tampa Bay
Miami at Denver
Philadelphia at Arizona
Carolina at Minnesota
Buffalo at New England
Houston at Pittsburgh

Monday, December 7
Dallas at Seattle

Bye: Bye: Indianapolis, Las Vegas, N.Y. Jets, Baltimore

WEEK 14

Thursday, December 10
Minnesota at New England

Sunday, December 13
Atlanta at Cleveland
Tennessee at Detroit
Chicago at Miami
Denver at N.Y. Jets
Indianapolis at Philadelphia
Houston at Washington
New Orleans at Carolina
Tampa Bay at Baltimore
L.A. Chargers at Las Vegas
Kansas City at Cincinnati
L.A. Rams at San Francisco
N.Y. Giants at Seattle
Buffalo at Green Bay

Monday, December 14
Pittsburgh at Jacksonville

Bye: Dallas, Arizona

WEEK 15

Thursday, December 17
San Francisco at L.A. Chargers

Saturday, December 19
Seattle at Philadelphia
Chicago at Buffalo

Sunday, December 20
Miami at Green Bay
Indianapolis at Tennessee
Cleveland at N.Y. Giants
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
Atlanta at Washington
Cincinnati at Carolina
Jacksonville at Houston
N.Y. Jets at Arizona
Denver at Las Vegas
Dallas at L.A. Rams
Detroit at Minnesota

Monday, December 21
New England at Kansas City

WEEK 16

Thursday, December 24
Houston at Philadelphia

Friday, December 25
Green Bay at Chicago
Buffalo at Denver
L.A. Rams at Seattle

Sunday, December 27
L.A. Chargers at Miami
Arizona at New Orleans
New England at N.Y. Jets
Cleveland at Baltimore
Tennessee at Las Vegas
San Francisco at Kansas City
Jacksonville at Dallas

Monday, December 28
N.Y. Giants at Detroit

Flex Games - Date/Time TBA
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Cincinnati at Indianapolis
Washington at Minnesota
Carolina at Pittsburgh

WEEK 17

Thursday, December 31
Baltimore at Cincinnati

Sunday, January 3
New Orleans at Atlanta
Indianapolis at Cleveland
N.Y. Giants at Dallas
Pittsburgh at Tennessee
Buffalo at Miami
Minnesota at N.Y. Jets
Seattle at Carolina
Las Vegas at Arizona
Detroit at Chicago
Philadelphia at San Francisco

Monday, January 4
Houston at Green Bay

Flex Games - Date/Time TBA
Denver at New England
Kansas City at L.A. Chargers
L.A. Rams at Tampa Bay
Washington at Jacksonville

WEEK 18

Flex Games - Date/Time TBA
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo
Cleveland at Cincinnati
L.A. Chargers at Denver
Detroit at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Indianapolis
Las Vegas at Kansas City
Seattle at L.A. Rams
Chicago at Minnesota
Miami at New England
Tampa Bay at New Orleans
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants
San Francisco at Arizona
Dallas at Washington
Atlanta at Carolina
Pittsburgh at Baltimore
Tennessee at Houston

NFL POSTSEASON

Wild-Card Weekend
Saturday, January 16
Sunday, January 17
Monday, January 18

Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, January 23
Sunday, January 24

AFC and NFC Championship
Sunday, January 31

Super Bowl LXI
Sunday, February 14 2027 • SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California

ALL IN THE FAMILY

BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

Think there's a little nepotism in the coaching business? Klint Kubiak was a 28-year-old wide receivers coach at the University of Kansas in 2015. Less than one month after Gary Kubiak won Super Bowl 50 that season as head coach of the Denver Broncos, he hired Klint, his son, as an offensive assistant.

Fast forward to 2026. With Klint Kubiak hired as the new head coach of the Las Vegas Raiders, there are four current head coaches who are sons or grandsons of former NFL head coaches.

San Francisco 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan was a high school senior when father Mike won the first of back-to-back Super Bowls with the Broncos in January 1998. Dallas Cowboys head coach Brian Schottenheimer was 11 years old when his dad, Marty Schottenheimer, got his first head-coaching job with the Cleveland Browns in 1984. Brian was hired by his dad on three different teams: as a 25-year-old assistant with the Kansas City Chiefs in 1998; as quarterbacks coach with the Washington Redskins in 2001; and as QBs coach with the San Diego Chargers in 2002.

Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay's dad never played or coached — but his grandfather, John McVay, was head coach of the New York Giants from 1976-78 and then a key executive with the 49ers from 1980-99, earning five Super Bowl rings along the way.

There are also two sets of brothers that will be coaching in 2026, with the Harbaughs (Jim and John) and the LaFleurs (Matt and Mike).

All in all, that means 25% of this year's NFL head coaches — one out of every four — has a relative who is currently or was once an NFL head coach.

When it comes to sibling rivalries, the LaFleurs have a long way to go to catch up to the Harbaughs. John and Jim, who famously became the first brothers to square off for a championship when John (193 career wins including postseason) led the Baltimore Ravens past Jim (71) and the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl XLVII, have combined for 264 NFL victories. That's the most ever for a pair of head-coaching brothers. Second on the brotherly list are the Grudens, with Jon (122) and Jay (35) combining for 157 wins.

As for father-son head-coaching tandems, Kyle Shanahan needs just nine more wins to make him and Mike the first father-son duo to both have at least 100 victories. Still, they've got a long way to go to catch the top pair.

HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE FATHER-SON HEAD-COACHING TANDEMS WITH THE MOST WINS*:

366

1. DON AND DAVID SHULA

David had only 19 career victories, but his dad just happens to be the NFL's all-time wins leader with 347.

269

2. MIKE AND KYLE SHANAHAN

We'll see if Kyle sticks around long enough to challenge the Shulas' mark. As it stands, Mike (178 wins) and Kyle (91) are the only father-son duo to have both taken a team to the Super Bowl.

3. MARTY AND BRIAN SCHOTTENHEIMER (212)

Marty (205 wins) was an NFL head coach for 21 years, so Brian has work to do after winning seven games in his first season with the Dallas Cowboys last year.

4. BUM AND WADE PHILLIPS (169)

Very evenly matched – Bum won 86 games, Wade 83.

5. JIM MORA AND JIM L. MORA (157)

Jim had 125 wins, Jim L. 32.

6. BUDDY AND REX RYAN (120)

Maybe the most colorful father-son pair. Both coaches won Super Bowls as assistants – Buddy as a defensive coordinator and Rex as a defensive line coach – though both Buddy (55 wins) and Rex (65) both had losing records as head coaches.

*Totals include postseason wins

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